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MY BOHEMIAN DAYS

BY

HARRY FURNISS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

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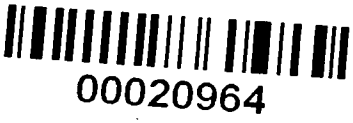
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To My Children

FRANK	London Scottish
LAWRENCE	Canadian Engineers
GUY MACKENZIE	Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders
DOROTHY	Red Cross V.A.D.

FOR THE GRAND SPIRIT IN WHICH
THEY LOYALLY "DID THEIR BIT"
IN THE GREAT WAR

I dedicate

THESE REMINISCENCES OF MY LIFE
AT THEIR AGE

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MY BOHEMIAN DAYS

CHAPTER I

THE STRAND OF THE OLD DAYS

Charles Dickens's sanctum in Wellington Street—"Billy" Russell—William B. Tegetmeier and the swarm of bees—The actors' street—The Bohemians' publisher—"Augustus Druriolanus"—The founder of *The Illustrated London News*—His scapegoat.

When I first made its acquaintance London's Bohemia consisted of a ramshackle, picturesque, and historically interesting jumble of famous old streets, narrow passages, "inns," square taverns, and publishing shops. In this interesting quarter jostled together vice and virtue, intellect and ignorance, poverty and opulence.

In this Alsatia dwelt "characters" both eccentric and clever, and, if not inspiring, they were at least artistic. The very pavements reeked with tobacco from the calumets of semi-savages, combined with the onions accompanying the chops and steaks which were carried from the cook-shop to the office of the wealthy banker or the establishment of the well-to-do tradesman.

All these odoriferous rookeries have been razed to the ground, and upon their site have arisen stately and imposing edifices in which are to be found the offices of the Marconi Company, colonial agencies, banks, etc., together with palatial newspaper and other offices. In

such an environment it is impossible that Bohemianism could ever exist. It would be a gross anachronism. As a matter of fact the death of Bohemianism is really due more to the genius of the architect than to any vagaries of fashion or fortune.

In Wellington Street, adjoining and, in fact, forming part of the old Gaiety Theatre, stood a charming little building with bow windows. In my youthful days it formed the office of *The Army and Navy Gazette*, the editor and part proprietor being Sir William, otherwise "Billy," Russell, the famous war correspondent of *The Times*, who, dull as his paper was, no doubt kept alive the light-hearted humour which pervaded the atmosphere of the pretty little editorial room, since it was for nine years the sanctum of no less a celebrity than the late Charles Dickens himself.

Here the great novelist laboured strenuously to nurse into a success his weekly paper *Household Words*, which, when "Billy" Russell made his name as a war correspondent in the Crimea, was exactly four years old. Dickens, like in after years my friend Irving at the Lyceum over the way, made his business office a rendezvous for his friends, entertaining them with little luncheons in the midst of work and bright suppers after the theatre. When George Edwardes was visibly swelling into affluence as a manager the journal of Red Tape was obliged to move out in order to allow more dressing room for the beauties of the Gaiety burlesque.

In the old days I recollect making a sketch for *The Illustrated London News* of a curious scene outside that quaint bow window. A crowd had gathered to watch a swarm of bees which had settled on the ledge of the window. Someone—it may possibly have been myself

WILLIAM B. TEGETMEIER.

—happily bethought himself of that dear old Bohemian Tegetmeier of *The Field* newspaper, the offices of which were luckily located close to the spot. He was brought upon the scene and a ladder obtained, and with the aid of a hearth broom he adroitly managed to capture the entire swarm intact.

This spare, alert figure of the celebrated nonagenarian was for years perhaps as familiar a figure as any daily treading the pavements of the Strand. William B. Tegetmeier was one of those wiry, thin little men who never seem to age; he was only robbed of his century by three years. In his long life he had been doctor, naturalist, journalist, but, above all, a Bohemian, the friend of Darwin and Russell, and a helper with that extraordinary work on the "Origin of Species." He was best known to the public as a great authority on pigeons, and best known to his friends in the precincts of the Savage Club, which he helped to found. When I first met Tegetmeier it was in the Savage Club, then situated in the Strand; in fact, you pushed open a door and found yourself in the club, there being no hall or entrance but the door into the street.

In this sidelight of Bohemia that evening I heard old George Grossmith, grandfather of the present George Grossmith, deliver one of his inimitable mock scientific lectures after dinner. Irving was there—before running round to the Lyceum where he had just been engaged at a moderate salary by Colonel Bateman—Charles (later Sir Charles) Wyndham, and many other actors who became famous and of whom, alas! many have ceased to strut their brief hour on the stage.

For some reason I was more struck by Tegetmeier than by any other member. Perhaps he was kind to

me as a visitor and a mere youth—anyway we struck up an acquaintance which lasted for many years. He was not only Bohemian in living, but in attire—a black slouch hat, a short waterproof cape, and a shabby portfolio under his arm. I recollect his calling to see me one day, and being immensely amused by the maid who answered the bell informing him that "Master did not require any models," and slamming the door in his face. Tegetmeier never smoked or drank and seldom ate—thus his youth.

The demolition of Catherine Street marked, if I may be allowed to say so, the disappearance of half the London Bohemians of literary pretensions.

The Era—the "Actors' Bible"—in its palmy days was the means of bringing crowds of the profession to the street, which, according to Halliday, was then devoted (before my time) to second-class eating-houses and the shops of newsvendors and advertising agents. The street had not changed its character in any particular when the exigencies of my profession compelled me to become an habitué, for it also contained various offices belonging to publishers who would, perhaps, be deemed second-class. The most notable figure among these was that of Tinsley, and Tinsley, familiarly known as "Bill," was *facile princeps* the Bohemians' publisher in those far-away days.

When I first made the acquaintance of the big city I was a constant frequenter, not only of the Gaiety Theatre, but also of the restaurant in the basement.

"The Gaiety Bar" was in those days, practically speaking, the literary and artistic Bohemians' club. Before my eyes now I imagine I can see the familiar figure of Gus Harris, with the glossiest of silk hats worn

at a perilous angle on one side of his head, his florid complexion, sparkling eyes, and the smile of self-satisfaction that is the heritage of the successful few! I can see him now, as was his wont, strutting up and down the Gaiety Bar, attired in immaculate evening dress with the then fashionable Inverness cape thrown over one shoulder.

It was this familiar personality that was so cleverly portrayed by Willie Edouin in that wonderfully successful farce *Our Flat*, at the old Strand Theatre.

"Augustus Druriolanus" was a shrewd, long-sighted, long-headed genius. He was essentially plucky, and for this quality, and for playing the game like a sportsman, he always commanded my sincere admiration. Even a more familiar figure than Harris's, however, was that of John Hollingshead, manager of the Gaiety, who with excellent reason prided himself upon keeping the sacred lamp of burlesque burning brightly for so many years.

Directly facing the old Gaiety were the offices of Gaze, of tourist fame. Over these there existed a typically Bohemian club. This was my first club in London, started simultaneously and I believe actually by the influence of the proprietors of *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*. For a year after my arrival in London I was marked for a contributor to that journal, and to locate my editor it was necessary for me to join that club and also frequent the Gaiety Bar.

What first led me to the Strand was to call at the office of *The Illustrated London News* with my sketches. The paper was then run in the interests of the widow of the first proprietor by a few directors.

Ingram, the founder of *The Illustrated London News* and pioneer of illustrated journalism, must have been

a remarkable man of a strong and impetuous nature. I have been told stories of his impetuosity, which I have no doubt were characteristic of him, but in all

SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS.

probability untrue. One was that whenever he was worked up to a high pitch of excitement, or in anger, it was his habit to rush up to the compositors' room and seize a particularly chubby, unaggressive "comp.," who was always ready and not unwilling to be the recipient

of other men's punishment. The Guv'nor having worked off his pent-up passion by kicking this selected scapegoat, would immediately empty his pockets of their contents as compensation for this assault and battery. The compositor was thus kicked into prosperity. He retired in time from business, having picked up sufficient to build a row of cottages with the money.

Another story. An artist was sent to China to supply sketches to *The Illustrated London News*. The agreement was to the effect that this artist was to receive a certain sum per week so long as he made sketches in China for the paper. In those days there was no telegraph, and it was some time before the young man could be informed that the proprietor had had enough of his sketches, interest in China having ceased, and that he was to return. The artist knew better. He replied that he had married, settled down there, and would continue to send sketches. In the agreement there was no limit of time. I think this story is true, for a friend of mine met the artist in far Cathay, "an old man with a long white beard, a large family, and an agreement with *The Illustrated London News*."

This remarkable man, Ingram, had died—drowned in Lake Michigan—some time before I knew the office. The affairs of the paper were then in the hands of the widow, Mr. Leighton, the printer, Mason Jackson, the art editor, and Mr. S. Reid, the artist. The latter was, *facile princeps*, the sketcher of streets, old buildings, cathedrals, and country houses. Who does not remember his "Haunted House," "The Hall, Christmastide," and other effective drawings in *The Illustrated London News*? Mr. Reid looked like a keen Scotch commercial traveller, invariably carrying a black bag.

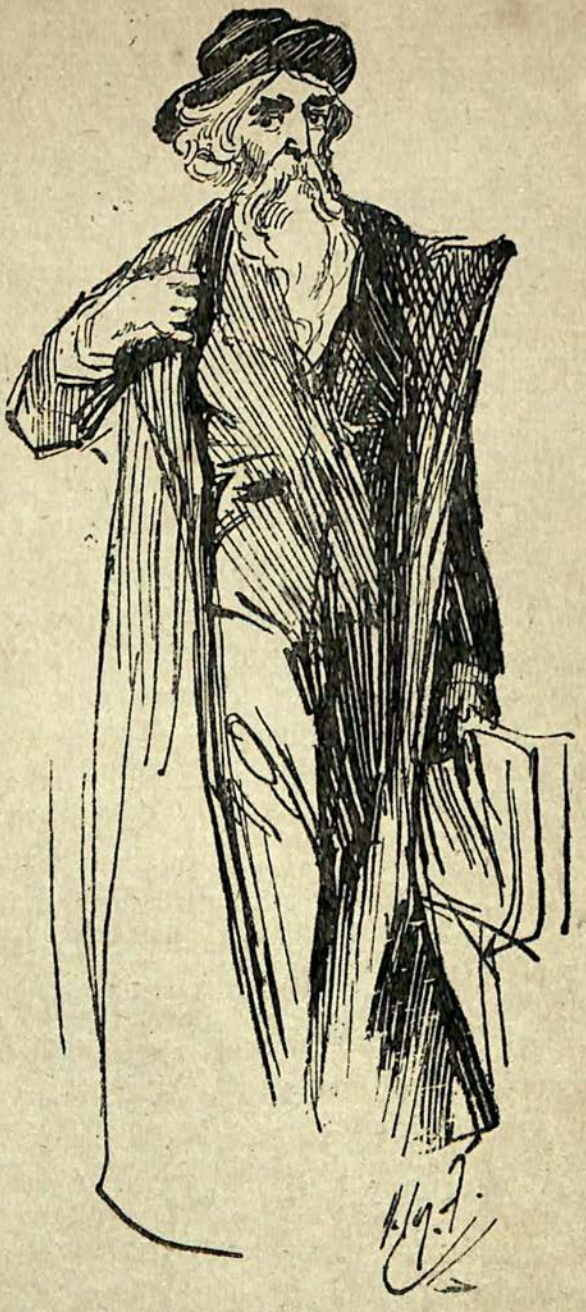
Thursday was the day set aside by the Art Editor to see contributors. I well recollect those Thursday gatherings. To use the familiar editorial term, the week's paper had been "put to bed," albeit anything but a "bed" of rest, for one heard the groaning, clashing, heated rolling machinery upon which bed the paper was, waiting one's turn. There was difficulty in hearing the lively chatter of those calling upon the Editor by appointment for work for the following number.

I recall a little man—a very little man—with a very long white beard resembling the typical Father Christmas cut off at the knees; he has a cheery, red face, a pleasant smile and a twinkling eye. This is the engraver of animal pictures. He has a friendly chat with me. I was but a boy, and he well in the autumn of life. He tells me of the old days, and I drink in all the incidents he informs me of anent the starting of *Punch*, of an uncle of mine, a publisher in Wine Office Court, where the *Punch* staff first met. He also tells me of his own daughter who is just starting as an artist.

Out of a parcel he takes her dainty sketches, and I admire them, for they were then just the same as they were when she became world-famous. Her Christian name was Kate and her surname Greenaway!

Thomas Purnell, leader writer on the *Globe*, was a familiar and most picturesque figure treading the Strand pavements when I was young. I believe I am right in saying that brilliant Welshman was at one time a driver of a coach in his native country, a self-made man. He had a very refined, almost Quixotic face, a long, lanky figure, flowing beard, and eyes that saw further than most people's.

I was looking over some writings of my old friend



THOMAS PURNELL.

Joseph Hatton the other day and came across an extraordinary illustration of Purnell's long-sightedness. Hatton was a great friend of "Tom" Purnell's, and once made a tour (about thirty years ago) in Holland with Purnell. It appears that Purnell was a passionate lover of Holland, "which, in his estimation, was the Naboth's vineyard of the Dutchman's envious neighbour Germany." This excitable Welshman, Purnell, delivered himself of a patriotic defiance of Germany on the occasion, and, adds Hatton, "pointed with a long, artistic finger the way the German legions would come. This done he triumphantly turned towards the sea to describe the British ships that would have landed bluejackets to the aid of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, to say nothing of their neighbour Antwerp, who would be in no less peril of her ships and her liberties. My experience of the Germans at home does not lead me to think that as a people they for a moment would dream of any such outrages as these and other startling forecasts suggest. But his Imperial Majesty William II is governed by a tremendous ambition, and England may no longer place implicit faith in his demonstrations of friendship."

These sentiments of two Strand literary men of years ago are certainly curious reading to-day.

CHAPTER II

SOME STRAND FREQUENTERS

Arthur Sketchley—"Racy Reece"—Henry S. Leigh—Lal Brough—Hubert de Burgh—His *Volume of Life*—Henry Irving—James Anderson—David James—The Duke of Beaufort

Two of the stoutest men, probably, who ever trod the Strand were in other ways conspicuous figures in the old days. One was Arthur Sketchley, who for a time had quite a big success with his books, *Mrs. Brown at the Play*, *Mrs. Brown at Margate*. Mrs. Brown—well, was his peg upon which to hang a somewhat indifferent imitation of Sairy Gamp on every conceivable subject. Sketchley gave "Readings" from his Mrs. Brown series at the Strand Theatre. The other stout man was a lecturer on sanitary and other matters, Joseph Pope, familiarly known as "Jope"; his brother, another alarmingly stout man, was Pope, Q.C., at one time leader of the Parliamentary Bar. These two Falstaffian Strand frequenters were one day seen to enter an ordinary four-wheeler—it is a fact they did—and it is a fact that the bottom came out of the cab!

A member of the Savage Club witnessed the strange event and hastened to the club; he was much sought for by disbelieving members and feted. In the end the poor fellow had to be sent home in a cab himself.

Another frequenter of the Strand in its Bohemian days was Robert Reece, known as "Racy Reece," apropos

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY.

I suppose of the facility of his pen, for he wrote burlesques and verse, and in fact anything required, by the yard

at high pressure. He was of the punning fraternity, but he was also a captious critic of the critics, and the Strand in his days was the critic's School for Scandal.

This is Reece's opinion of them. I quote from the opening of his screed on critics by whom he had suffered :

> You know me ? I live by my pen,
> In anonymous courage not lacking.
> I thrive on the murder of men
> Whose boots I'm not worthy of blacking.
> I live in a vapour that seems
> Half brandy, half something mephitic.
> I'm drunkenness dealing in dreams—
> *That's it !* yes ! you're right ! I'm a Critic !

Henry S. Leigh was a genius of a kind, who lived his life in the Strand. He was a very neat versifier—any one who has read his *Carols of Cockayne* must appreciate that; but his ambition was to have the admiration of the Strand. It was his world, and he was little known outside it; now and then he dropped into the Savage Club and warbled one of his clever carols, sitting with his overcoat on as he accompanied himself on the piano —ready to continue his hourly pilgrimage in the Strand. He was the son of Leigh whose famous school of art Thackeray immortalised as "Gandish" in *The Newcomes* in a composite character portrait of Sass and Leigh.

A well-known comedian who was for a time at the Gaiety Theatre and at all times the wit of the Strand, Lal Brough, one of the famous Brothers Brough, dramatic authors, was originally connected with *The Illustrated London News*. Lionel Brough was an excellent raconteur; he imitated the Cockney, the Yorkshireman, the Scot, Yankee, and Irishman with marvellous truthfulness; and no matter how busy one might be, or how much

in a hurry, Brough would never let you pass him in the Strand without telling you his latest story. In this way his stories became public property, and have long since been put on the shelf labelled "chestnuts."

ROBERT REECE AND HENRY S. LEIGH.

Pantomime writers seemingly found inspiration in the conglomeration of humanity frequenting the Strand. One of these suppliers of pantomimes was Charles Millward; he was also a journalist, inasmuch as he provided a London Letter to country papers, his London being

the Strand. In private life he was a mural mason! He was a sallow-faced, serious, black-bearded, depressing individual, of whom H. J. Byron, the great wit of the Strand, observed: "I have just met Millward: he looked as proud as a corpse with two tombstones."

"LAL" BROUGH.

By the way this remark reminds me that once, and I believe once only, the curtain was rung up on a new play and rung down again without a word being spoken — I do not mean a *L'Enfant Prodigue* kind of play, but a serious play in three written acts. The fact is it was too serious. When the curtain went up a couple of mutes were "discovered" standing at either side of the door of a house, the supposition being that there was a corpse in it. The play was the corpse, for the audience was so indignant not a word was spoken! This was at the Old Globe Theatre in the Strand.

One of the most interesting literary men I met at the offices of a paper in the Strand in my early days in London was Hubert de Burgh, a gentlemanly, tall,

HUBERT DE BURGH.

good-looking fellow, the son of Colonel de Burgh, a father he was proud of, not so much for his successes in the battlefields—indeed, I cannot recall his even mentioning his father's feats at arms—but I well remember his admiration for his father's success as a military after-

dinner speaker. I think young de Burgh edited and published his father's post-prandial martial orations.

De Burgh himself was a poet and wrote for various periodicals. He lived for a time in the same house as another poet, better known to the world, then much read and hotly discussed—the great Swinburne.

De Burgh was the antithesis to the other poet. He was a fine specimen of a man, no nonsense about him, a genial Bohemian, not dependent—fortunately, perhaps—on his pen. His eccentricity took the form of never allowing any acquaintance he met to leave him: he insisted on being seen to his door. He would walk, if you had time to spare, but if not one had to take a cab. This peculiar eccentricity was in reality fear. He had some complaint of the heart, and always dreaded dying in the Strand. Often have I seen him to his door, and great was his gratitude. Poor De Burgh did actually die suddenly.

Wit and poet, De Burgh died when he was thirty-two, while the ink was still wet on the following lines, the last he ever wrote, entitled *The Volume of Life*. The first four lines ran:

> A volume there is called the Volume of Life.
> Seldom its pages exceed fourscore:
> Those pages teem with sorrow and strife.
> Yet they who read them still crave for more.

The concluding verse was:—

> And in some copies—ah! the print is so bad—
> The tale such a tissue of sin and of tears,
> That the weary reader is all too glad
> When the printer's FINIS at last appears.

The theatrical associations of the Strand alone are sufficient for a chapter. Such is the whirligig of time,

IRVING AS "DIGBY GRANT" IN "THE TWO ROSES."

there is not one Strand theatre standing now that I frequented in my early life in London. The Strand Theatre is now a tube station, the Gaiety, the Adelphi, and the Lyceum are not the theatres I sat in. The Opéra Comique, the Globe, and others disappeared to widen the Strand.

I came to London in the year 1873, when the Strand was the centre of theatreland.

That young actor, Henry Irving, afterwards Sir Henry, was having his first benefit in the Lyceum Theatre, under the management of Colonel Bateman, who had "discovered" this promising young actor when playing Digby Grant in *The Two Roses*, an extraordinary performance which is so often referred to, and had brought him to the Lyceum to support his daughter in his various productions. But it was not long before young Irving asserted himself and brought him the play called *The Bells*, written by an obscure and generally Bohemian barrister, Lewis, who lived on this bit of luck for years, and always said, "I made Irving."

But what overshadowed everything in London and permeated the stage and the music-hall was the brilliant visit of the Shah. "Have you seen the Shah?" was the catch-phrase of the hour. His photograph was in every window and his picture in every paper: at the Opéra Comique was produced a most amusing burlesque of the Shah's visit—*Kissi-Kissi: or the Pa, the Ma, and the Padisha*, by F. C. Burnand, music by Offenback. A brother of Arthur Sullivan's played the Shah: he was the original judge in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* in after-years. The Shah in the first act was represented as a bankrupt: all his famous diamonds

had disappeared; in their place on his hat and around his neck were strings of pawn tickets.

It was stated at the time that the Shah was so impressed with the attire of the young ladies in the ballet that on his return he adopted it as the Court dress in Persia! — hardly less startling than the adoption of the Persian ladies' dress would be for our Court here. The sight of our Court beauties tied up in sacks, the shape of balloons, although economic, would cause more laughter than any raised by the performance of *Kissi-Kissi* at the old Opéra Comique.

"I MADE IRVING."

Antony and Cleopatra was the attraction at Drury Lane, under the direction of F. B. Chatterton, that old-time and unlucky manager—a magnificent spectacle, principally famous for the truly beautiful scenery by Beverley. Antony was played by an actor of the old school—James Anderson—whom I knew very

well in after-years. He had made his money in Australia when the first people over there were making theirs, and this return to his own glory in London—for it was mostly glory and little pay in his younger days—was perhaps the last glitter of this "star." After that he grew his beard, retiring to his armchair at the Garrick Club.

Shortly after seeing him as Antony, I recollect passing along Old Wych Street, in the Strand, and observing him standing with his back to a shop door, gazing intently at an oil painting which was high up in the window of a second-hand shop opposite to him. I recalled this little incident to him years afterwards in the smoking-room of the Garrick Club. Taking me into another room, he showed me, framed, that very portrait I saw him looking at years before—it was a portrait of himself in *Coriolanus*.

When he was a younger actor and the rage of London, playing Coriolanus, a young unknown artist begged Anderson to sit for his portrait in character, as it would be a good advertisement for the young artist. Anderson never saw the painting or the artist again until, as an old man, he spied it hanging up in the second-hand shop. "I wondered was it a portrait of myself, so I went to the other side of the street to have a good look at it. There was no mistaking it, my boy; it was Jimmy Anderson's neck. There is not another man in the world with so long a neck as mine."

This portrait of Anderson still hangs on the walls of the Garrick, close to the portrait of another actor who flourished at the same time—Walter Lacy.

Burlesques were rampant in those days, written by Reece, Byron, and Burnand—hardly a week passed that

these happy-go-lucky punsters did not contribute one, but the majority unfortunately were short-lived.

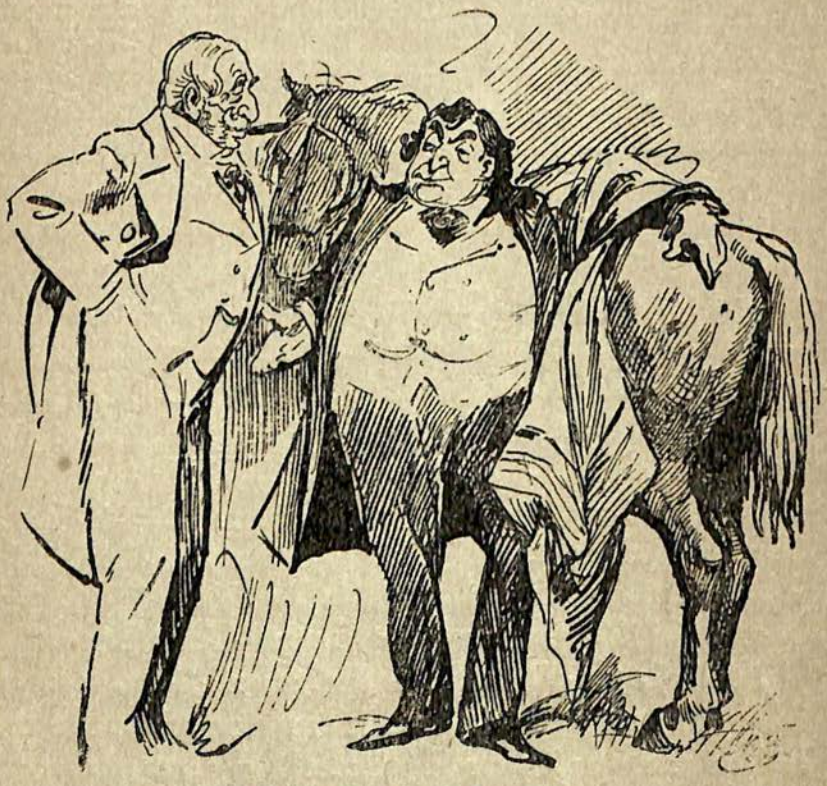
Always an ardent Dickensian, I looked in at Charing Cross Theatre, now part of Charing Cross Hospital, to see a farce written by Charles Dickens, the only drama, it is said, that the great novelist ever wrote. It was called *A Strange Gentleman*, but I have no recollection whatever of it. But I do recollect seeing at the Globe just then a play written on *Dombey and Son*. I remember it particularly on account of one of the finest impersonations I ever saw, certainly the best of all Dickens's on the stage, the Carker of James Fernandez.

Then at the Vaudeville those old English plays were having a most successful run. *The School for Scandal*, played to big houses for over four hundred nights, which was considered a tremendous success in those days, and was followed by *The Road to Ruin*, was the first of the series I saw.

The fine cast included W. Farren, David James, Charles Warner, Tom Thorne, Horace Wigan, Miss Sophie Larkin, and one of "The Two Roses" who had bloomed so long in the same theatre—Amy Fawcett.

David James pleased me the most. There was no doubt he was one of the best low comedians we ever had on the London stage. I met him years afterwards, and he always struck me as an unassuming, clever man of the world, like all his race with an eye to the main chance. When he made his "pile," as the Yankees say, over the phenomenal run of *Our Boys*, he practically retired. His real name was Belasco. He was always the low comedian, off the stage as well as on, even when patronised by what he would call "the upper succles."

The Duke of Beaufort, who in the eighties was the king of theatrical Bohemia, and a well-known frequenter of the Gaiety Theatre, had a great liking for Belasco, and accepted an invitation to lunch at the comedian's house somewhere in Camden Town. The



DAVID JAMES AND THE DUKE.

Duke drove up in his four-in-hand, causing a stir in that neighbourhood of cheap lodging-houses which had not been equalled for many a day. The lunch over, the company were invited into the back garden to enjoy their weeds. David James, then addressing himself to the Duke and his friends, said: "I believe, your grace,

you are very fond of horseflesh. Would you like to look over my stables ? "

The Duke, who was always the courtier, bowed, and said nothing would please him better. They marched up the little back garden to the little stable, in which stood one miserable animal covered with a sack. Whisking off the old sack, James said to the Duke, " He ain't much to look at, your grace, but he is all right on Sundays for the family."

CHAPTER III

THE MERRY "SEVENTIES"

The Strand Theatre—Mrs. Malaprop—Old-time actors—Barry Sullivan—The Gilbert and Sullivan gold mine—The world, the flesh, and the devil—Satirical periodicals—*The Octopus*—*The Owl*—Lord Glenesk as a humorist—*Yorick*—*Fun*

THE seventies of which I am writing were the days of gay Lord Quexes, Lord Henry Lennoxes, Lord Ranelaghs, and other foppish old Don Juans hanging around the stages of burlesque and ballet. Paddy Green presided at Evans's, the wondrous place with its chops and baked potatoes, its virtuous choir-singing, and champagne corks popping; and the Poses Plastiques were on view nightly in Leicester Square. Money was plentiful, the Franco-German war had made England rich, and our country cousins were having a good time—that was all!

Clubland was then select and limited. Restaurants were few. Actors met and supped at the taverns, and at the Bohemian little clubs; the Savage Club, with its sanded floor, was then their club of luxury. Salaries were modest, so were actors. They lived for their work and for themselves, not for society. Bohemianism was their dream; good-fellowship their motto. They loved their London as London loved them.

The Strand Theatre, now a tube station, was the merriest side-show in the seventies and early eighties. One was always sure of a laugh there. There was even laughter behind the scenes, for was not Mrs. Swanborough, the manageress, the Mrs. Malaprop of her time? Was it not also the home of Terry and Marius, of Miss St. John and Nellie Bromley, James and Thorne, Harry Cox, and many other ever-to-be-remembered entertainers?

Many stories of Mrs. Swanborough have been freely reported. Many of these "Mrs. Malapropisms" were, I think, the invention of Henry J. Byron, the actor and prolific playwright. They were generally asserted to have occurred in Mrs. Swanborough's conversations with the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward—who frequently visited the Strand Theatre, and was duly received by the proprietress—"'Ave your Royal 'Ighness seen Mr. Doré's wonderful picture, *Christ Leaving the Criterion*?"

"I say, Mrs. Swanborough, you want an architect to look over this theatre; it absolutely rocks when I walk in."

"Now does it, your Royal 'Ighness? That must be caused by the obesity of the audience when you enter."

I believe I am right in saying that it was at the Strand Theatre that King Edward gave an instance of his keen observation and strictness.

One evening he observed the conductor of the orchestra wearing foreign orders, specially put on for the event. King Edward sent round and ordered him to remove them, as it was contrary to the rules of Court etiquette to wear foreign orders without special permission.

Actors in those days were conspicuous. Nowadays

all men seem alike, but there was no mistaking the old comedian, and particularly the old tragedians in the Strand, Phelps and Ryder, Creswick and Barry Sullivan. The last-named was perhaps the most conspicuous of the four. He never forgot—or allowed those he met to forget—that he was the greatest tragedian on the stage. The power of his Hibernian accent, his beetle brows and flashing eyes were always at play.

I recollect seeing him cross the Strand through the crowded traffic, and for the moment I thought he would have been run over by a hansom. Not a bit of it. The great and only tragedian opened his mouth, flashed his eyes, struck a pose—and the horse reared until the great Barry strode past. There was the power of personality if you like!

My work took me to the theatres a good deal. For *The Illustrated London News* I sketched Gilbert and Sullivan's first success at the Opéra Comique. No one then realised what a gold mine those operas would eventually prove to be, and as a matter of fact the promoters had "to go into the Strand" to find some one with a modest few hundreds to work the mine. That lucky some one turned out to be the proprietor of the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, and to look after his interests he placed his nephew, Mr. George Edwardes, in the concern. Mr. Edwardes was subsequently the ruler of the Gaiety Theatre in the Strand, and many others—so you see what a chance meeting in the Strand will bring about in the fortunes of men.

The busy, crowded Strand has, until the last widening and improvements spoilt its fun, been the rendezvous of the members of *the* profession and others connected with the stage. I recollect being introduced to a keen

little Welshman, carrying a black bag; he was a business traveller then, who had just produced his first play in London—I think it was called *Heart of Hearts*—at the Vaudeville Theatre in the Strand. He has now been famous for years, and success has not spoilt him. When a commercial traveller he saw life and saw the theatre,

THE POWER OF THE TRAGEDIAN'S EYE.

and gained the experience out of which the popular plays of Henry Arthur Jones have proved so human and delightful.

In my early days in London, and for some years afterwards the Strand was the rendezvous of most men connected with literature and the stage, and a good sprinkling of artists and musicians, to say nothing of the law; and

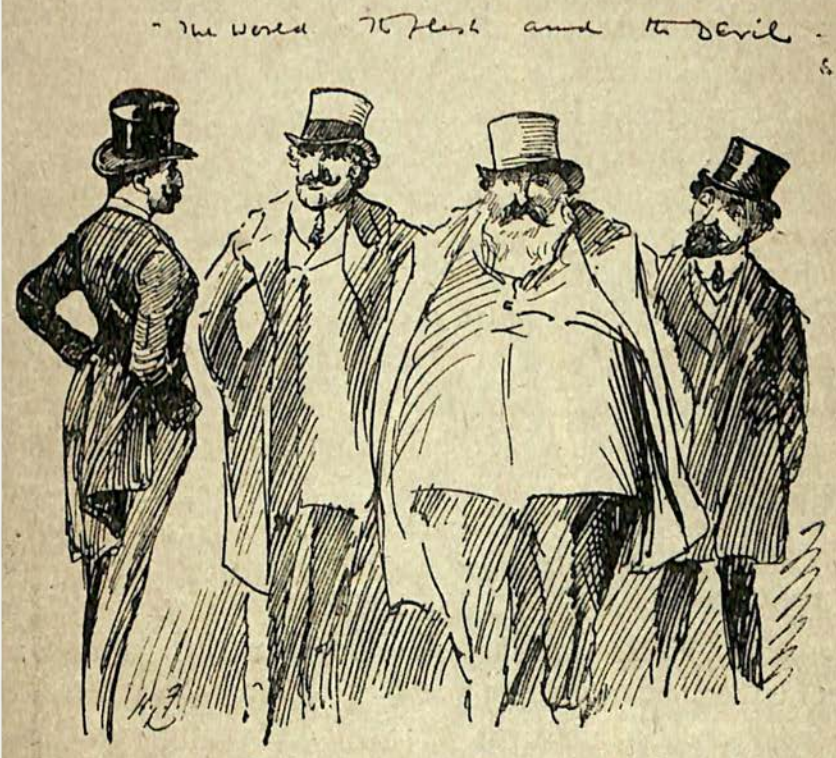
these were not needy Bohemians, but the shining lights of the day. The fact is recorded that one day H. J. Byron, the actor and witty playwright, came "promiscuously" upon three gentlemen walking arm-in-arm in the Strand—Edmund Yates, Henry Labouchere, and the massive Arthur Sketchley. "Be ye greeted," Byron cried, "ye three greatest enemies of man—world, flesh, and devil."

Dutch, German, Russian, French men of letters—mostly letters of introduction—found sympathetic and congenial spirits in the Strand. The oldest of them all was a curious little man, Dr. Gustave Ludwig Strauss, who wrote under the nom-de-plume "The Old Bohemian." A bright-eyed, sharp-nosed little face, belonging to a head much too big (artistically) for his body, peered out of a massive head of long, wavy hair and spreading beard and moustache. He crept up to one silently purring, but once he opened his mouth he never stopped talking.

I recollect I made a caricature of him as a cat—which the Bohemian's publisher walked off with, and the "Doctor" cut me ever afterwards. The old Bohemian was a well-educated man, one of those jack-of-all- (literary) trades and master of none—at least not in a commercial sense. He wrote a delightful autobiography of which George Augustus Sala said, "Fiction is liberally mingled with fact." The old Bohemian eventually found sanctuary in the Charterhouse, but he was too Bohemian for its hospitality and left it.

In the seventies there was a tremendous boom in satirical periodicals. *The Tomahawk* had just been buried, and Arthur a'Beckett, its editor, had retired into the wigwam of the hunchback-chief, *Punch*, to smoke the calumet of peace in the odour of respectability.

Figaro in London, believed to be endowed by the Emperor of the French, Napoleon the Third, and run as propaganda for him by Mortimer, was very popular, principally due to the very clever nonsense written by "Philander Smiff."



At the same time we had *The Mask*, written and illustrated by the ex-dragoon officer Alfred Thompson, artist, writer, editor, playwright, and producer; *The Glow Worm*, a theatrical broadsheet which used to circulate at night in the theatres. Of a more satirical nature was *The Hawk*. For these and a whole host of satirical journals there seemed no difficulty in finding backers.

Men like myself were sought out by those bitten by

the craze for caustic journalism. I recollect receiving a letter from a stranger in the Midlands proposing to start a journal of this class in London, and requesting me to meet him. I duly presented myself at the Salisbury Hotel, off Fleet Street, and was ushered into a private room, where a funny little man was seated, not much bigger than myself, of middle age and of apparently prosperous circumstances.

Manuscripts (all his own) were scattered here, there, and everywhere. A bottle of champagne and a box of cigars—it was 11 a.m.—were open on the table, pens and ink, despatch boxes, scissors, a bottle of paste—all the paraphernalia of an editor's office—gave a strong impression of serious "business." Indeed, I never met any one before or since more determined to be an editor and proprietor than this gentleman from the country.

He informed me that he had plenty of money to finance a publication, but that, it subsequently transpired, was the only asset he possessed. He had any number of ideas, which he dilated upon at length with evident self-satisfaction. He had, he told me, been trying for a long time to get his articles published, but all editors were ignorant, or jealous, and not one would accept a line of his. He had therefore come right into their centre to show up their stupidity, and the crass stupidity of all men, public or private; in fact, he intended to make things hum. He wished me to be his artist.

As the title of his weekly sensation was *The Viper* I shook my head. He then suggested *The Vampire*. "No." He smiled. "I thought you would not like these," he said, "but you *will* like the title I have decided upon." He opened the door to see that all Fleet Street

was not eavesdropping, opened a despatch box, and laid a sheet of paper in front of me on which was written—*The Octopus.*

"Now then, young man, please do not repeat that title, not even to me—not a word! You have grasped

"THE OCTOPUS."

it?—good! Now, lose no time, design the first page, including that title, bring it, and we will then discuss business. The tentacles of the Octopus, you see, embrace all the subjects I have described to you."

The octopus—I am now referring to natural history, not unnatural journalism—was the sensation of the hour.

It was being exhibited at the Brighton Aquarium, and in those days was considered unique. This fact, no doubt, inspired my acquaintance from the Midlands, but he failed to see what I did at once—that the public would look upon such a title as a scientific publication on the fish—already overdone. In my rough design I made this point evident. Under the heading I sketched in a portrait of dear old Henry Lee, the popular manager of the Brighton Aquarium, and sent it to the Salisbury Hotel. By return of post I received the following note:

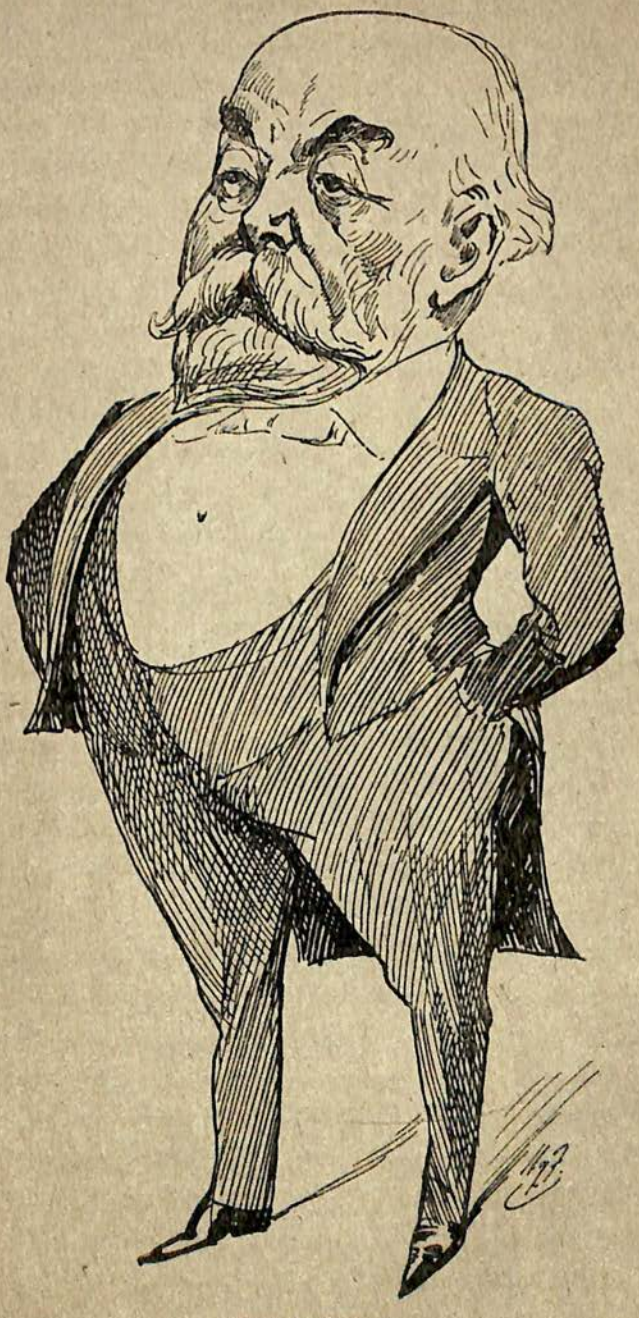
"Sir,—I did not ask you to criticise the commands of your editer and proprieter. As you do not take this commission seriously, I am finding another artist."

The Octopus never appeared, and I never again heard of its "Editer and Proprieter."

The aristocrat of all these satirical papers was *The Owl*, edited by Algernon Borthwick, afterwards Lord Glenesk, of *The Morning Post*, with a staff—unpaid, I believe—of extraordinarily clever men, literary, diplomatic, and political.

Mr. T. A. S. Escott, for so long the acting-editor of *The World* in its palmy days, and the right hand of its proprietor, Edmund Yates, thus described it:

"*The Owl*, like *The Pall Mall Gazette* of 'Pendennis,' might have made the boast—never, as a fact, put forward by its namesake—that it was written by gentlemen for gentlemen. The information it often contained in politics, especially in diplomacy, was generally in advance of, and more accurate than, that which appeared in the daily or weekly press. It might, no doubt, have commanded even then a wide and paying circulation.



LORD GLENESK.

It was, however, ostentatiously conducted with a fine disregard of commercial principles.

"The writers thought themselves sufficiently rewarded by the opportunity of showing, in good company, their brightness, cleverness, knowingness, and wit to a choice circle of appreciative readers; they only sent in their copy to the editor when they were in the humour to write, or thought they had something that would repay the trouble of saying; their engagements, social, political, or diplomatic, made their movements rather uncertain; they refused to be 'dunned for copy.'"

As a consequence, newsvendors were not very keen to obtain orders for the clever columns, appearing at eccentrically uncertain intervals. It was really brought out for the edification of the staff, not as a commercial speculation.

Lord Glenesk was a very remarkable and fascinating man, courteous, witty, good-looking, and a master of small talk. He was an excellent journalist and a very hard worker to boot, though no one would have believed this in his latter days when he became proprietor of *The Morning Post*, as he then delighted to pose as a dilettante.

He was particularly clever at selecting the right men for his staff. One man, I recollect, he heard making a speech at some political meeting; he at once engaged him as a leader writer, and he remained on the staff till his death. This journalist prided himself that he was not a Fleet Street man; and Bohemia, so called, was to him unknown. He was elected to the Garrick Club and soon became one of its journalistic features—not a pleasant feature either, for he was an egotist and a gourmand, and one of the ugliest men I have ever met.

Lord Glenesk had a keen sense of humour, and was an

IRVING
AS
KING LEAR

excellent raconteur. I remember he gave me quite an entertainment while we were travelling together alone in a carriage to the country one Sunday morning. Irving had produced his much criticised representation of King Lear the previous evening. I was giving a show that night and was unable to be present—perhaps the only first night of Irving's I missed. Glenesk was full of the subject of Irving's terrible mistake in playing the King as an imbecile. It appears that Irving was for some reason seized with the unaccountable idea of so playing the part at the eleventh hour when he stood at the wings ready to go on; otherwise I am sure he would never have made such a blunder.

. . . . .

In the part he was almost inaudible, and Glenesk's burlesque of Irving's peculiar utterance and mannerism was immense. So tickled was I, though heartily sorry for Irving, that when I saw the performance at the Lyceum a few evenings later, Glenesk's imitation haunted me all through, and I could hardly refrain from laughing. It had the same effect upon me as when I saw Royce at the Gaiety burlesquing Irving's performance in *The Corsican Brothers*, one of Irving's most successful parts.

It was in that burlesque at the Gaiety—how good those genuinely funny burlesques of the time were, to be sure—that Royce in the duel scene appeared with only one brace over his spotless white shirt. The ghost —his brother—wore the other!

An imitation of the defunct *Tomahawk* was started soon after I came to London, and I was engaged to illustrate it, being the only artist on the staff.

It was doomed by its name *Yorick*.

"Alas, poor *Yorick*!" was inevitable, and I was asked

to design for the cover a very sad Yorick gazing at a bauble, while a female figure, resembling poor Ophelia, was shown in a set stage scene for *Hamlet*.

Its editor was Richard Dowling, the novelist, who, though a humorist to order, was a sentimentalist by nature, a mild delightful Bohemian with a mind void of satire, unkindliness, or aggressiveness. Consequently, apart from the size of the paper, and my cartoon, "with a colour block," similar to Matt Morgan's cartoons in *The Tomahawk*, it was a very tame production. The letterpress was respectable and the effect artistically, literary, and commercially was nil. The man who found the money and lost it was a heavy good Christian Newcastle man in the glass trade, a personal friend and great admirer of Dowling.

The advent of its publication brought to my knowledge for the first time a trick in the printing trade, which, alas! has annoyed me more than once since. It was this. Certain questionable little printers in possession of some obscure, ramshackle printing establishment in the purlieus of Fleet Street watch every announcement of a new paper.

As soon as its title is known no time is lost in getting out something that looks like a periodical with the same title and dated back a few weeks. This is duly presented to those bringing out the new venture, with all sorts of injunctions threatened, and damages claimed. Then these unscrupulous printers, after bluffing for a time, suggest compromising for as much as they can squeeze out of the bewildered and excited promoters of the new periodical.

I happened to be in the office of *Yorick* when this trick was played. I took up the spurious *Yorick*, which

we were informed was some weeks old, and discovering the printer's ink still wet, I threw the copy out of the window, and took upon myself to tell the man who brought it that he might pick it out of the gutter on his rapid exit from the office.

Like Thackeray and other men of letters one could mention, Dowling began to write late in life. He was thirty or more before he came with his mother to London to start in literature. He had been an omnivorous reader from childhood, and therefore actually saw the world through the works of those he had read, and not for himself, the exception being in his first book, *The Mystery of Killard*, which he wrote of the wild Irish country coast he had come from, and in this book he gave a wonderfully fresh and strong picture of nature.

When I read that book I thought that Dowling was going to be a great author, and when I met him and delighted in his companionship, I thought his wit must surely assert itself, and that soon his name would become of world-wide fame. But he soon drifted into the quicksands of Bohemianism and never got off. He sank a wreck, with a rich cargo of genius that was never delivered to the world.

Dowling's work was much influenced by that of Edgar Allen Poe; he was always studying Poe's books, reading them to me, and delighted to discuss them in detail. I started illustrating Poe, but, strange to say, I never went on with the drawings, though I still enjoy reading his stories. Dowling wrote some clever tales in Poe's style—probably better known now as the Sherlock Holmes school.

Fun had a long career, and in its earlier days had a better staff than any other humorous paper was ever

endowed with. It was edited by "Young Tom Hood," with Henry Sampson, founder of *The Referee*, as his right-hand man, and H. J. Byron. Sir W. S. Gilbert's *Bab Ballads* appeared in its pages; and among the literary contributors were Francis Burnand, subsequently Sir Francis and editor of *Punch*, Prowse, George Rose ("Arthur Sketchley"), Tom Archer, Tom Robertson, the dramatist, William Brough, and Clement Scott; and George R. Sims, when Sampson became editor after Tom Hood's death, became a vigorous contributor.

RICHARD DOWLING AS POE.

Among its best-known artists were Matt Morgan, Boyd Houghton, Brunton (whose work was similar to Dicky Doyle's in *Punch*), and that very clever and delightful artist Paul Grey, who, alas! died just as he was making a great reputation; after him the genial Gordon Thompson was for years the cartoonist. He was followed by Fred Barnard as cartoonist, but it cannot be said the accomplished and versatile illustrator was at home in political cartooning.

There were a host of others all as brilliant, including Sullivan, with his inimitable British workman series. I have doubtless omitted many names, both writers and artists, of that extraordinary staff, but these are sufficient to show how excellent it was and how cheap, and all for a penny.

William Brunton was, if I may use the term, the Bohemian caricaturist, in the same way as Wallis Mackay was in a later period; both were essentially of the Fleet

WILLIAM BRUNTON AND HIS "TRADE MARK."

Street clique, always at hand for any new venture, and thoroughly imbued with the spirit of their surroundings.

The capital letter W, laid on its side, attached to the capital letter B, divided with an arrow, makes a representation of clever W. B.'s familiar signature.

Old Tegetmeier introduced me to Brunton as his "double-hearted friend," and remarked that when some one sang Longfellow's poem, "The Arrow and the Song"—then enjoying such a vogue—which begins with the words:

> I shot an arrow into the air:
> It fell to earth, I know not where,

a member of the Savage Club said that William Brunton had swallowed it.

CHAPTER IV

ARTISTS AND THEIR STUDIOS, THEIR DEALERS, AND THEIR MODELS

The prosperous seventies—The picture dealer—Shark—Bluff studios in Bloomsbury—An artists' model—"Mr. Galey"—A life class—A dancing academy—"Cramp"

To describe the art world in London in the early seventies is to paint a picture no one under the age of sixty would credit as the truth.

It was the height of English artists' prosperity. Money was plentiful; all had become rich through the boom in exports during the Franco-German War. Those who had "made their pile" had a burning desire to lessen that pile as soon as possible. They literally threw their money about.

Just then the picture dealer arose in the artistic firmament. "Buy, buy, buy!" was his cry. In those days the one idea was to buy pictures, larger, dearer, and more of them than your neighbour possessed. It was not Art for Art's sake; it was pictures for profit's sake.

Alas! what a showman's bubble it all was. Now that it has burst, investors see their masterpieces knocked down at Christie's for a mere song. Picture dealers in the old-fashioned flourishing days of art were a clever set of rogues. Horse-dealers could not hold a candle

to them in the two necessary accomplishments of their trade—bluff and lies.

One wonders nowadays how the dreadful art of the Mid-Victorian era sold so well. The worst artists in that most inartistic age made, if not fortunes, comfortable incomes. Those who were successful made fortunes. Pictures bought off the easel for a couple of thousand pounds, and re-sold at Christie's within that period fetching a thousand pounds more, are now knocked down for a few paltry pounds.

"Why is it?" asks the unfortunate owner. "My father (or grandfather) bought this Academician's picture from Shark, the dealer, for £2,500, a sound investment, he was told; a picture written about and talked about. Yet now it fetches nothing. Dishonest bluff on the part of Shark? Absurd! Why, he offered to take it back at the same price within three years, but father knew that if it was worth that to the dealer it was worth more as an investment."

Quite so, that is where Shark's bluff took his parent in. If he first told his parent the artist's work would live, he lied and he knew it, for it was only his buying up all that wretched artist's work that gave it, for the time, a purely fictitious value. Dear me, how those dealers played the game, to be sure! I knew it, I saw it. I warned friends, but they were bitten, and now facts speak for themselves. There was a picture ring, or trust, or whatever word you like for keeping up fictitious reputations and prices to work on the cupidity of the ignorant connoisseur when money was scarce. This gang condensed it by getting their clients to invest in old masters. In the meantime the modern painters, far superior to those of the mid-Victorian era, had a bad time of it.

Poor Burton Barber, a painter much engaged by Queen Victoria, was eagerly sought after by the dealers of his day. He was a slow painter and too conscientious to make money, for he could not "pot-boil," and he was too much of an invalid to make a bargain. I stepped in and tried to help him. I mentioned a picture he was painting to the proprietors of a weekly illustrated paper as one suitable for the plate for their Christmas number. This they saw, and offered to pay a handsome sum to the artist for the right of reproduction, he to retain the original picture. It was with difficulty I persuaded him to tell his dealer that he would retain his copyright himself. "Why?" asked the dealer. Then Barber gave the reason.

CHARLES BURTON BARBER AND THE DEALER.

"Publish *your* work in a Christmas number! My dear sir," said the dealer to the nervous artist, "that would absolutely ruin any chance I have of disposing of it to my client who buys your work."

Barber therefore did not offer it to the illustrated

paper, but the dealer did half an hour afterwards, and pocketed a far larger sum for the right of it to appear as a coloured plate in a Christmas number than he gave the artist for the picture. He then sold it for an increased sum to his client, as the publication had added to its value!

If the haunts and trysting-places of the Bohemian verged on squalor, the homes and studios of the artists presented in most cases an aspect of faded grandeur. For the work of the artist both space and light are requisite, and in those days properly erected studios were by no means common. So, as a rule, a first-floor in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury or Fitzroy Square, with three lofty windows and huge folding doors, leading to the back room, which formed the bedroom, constituted the "studio" of the artist, while the upper floor did duty as the "den" of the author.

Grand old houses were these; houses which at one time were the homes of the élite of London, equipped as they were with splendid oak-panelled halls, imposing staircases and rooms, with Adam mantelpieces and lovely over-doors and ceilings. Attached to the railings outside the hall door were the old ironwork posts to which were affixed the oil lamp and the enormous twisted snuffers used in the days of Sedan chairs and their preceding torch-bearers, for the light-carriers to extinguish their flambeaux.

Those studios in Bohemia might be easily identified from their exteriors, for the three large front windows on the first floor were half blocked up, either by closing their lower shutters, or, what was much more common, by using a high curtain of a green opaque material. This proceeding was necessary in order to obtain a top and naturally, if possible, a north light.

I recollect a novelist friend of mine, who inhabited one of these roomy first floors in Bloomsbury, once writing to ask me if I would send him some artists' models. In a story he was writing it was necessary to introduce some and he wished to study the type. I instructed him to block up the lower portions of his windows in the way I have described. He did so, and one day sufficed to furnish him with the information he required. The "new artist," as he became *pro tem.*, promptly received dozens of callers from among the numerous tribe of models who were wont to prowl about the neighbourhood in search of work.

A MODEL.

I venture to publish an incident or two concerning artists' models.

There came a knock upon my studio door one day. It was a slight, hesitating knock, but as it was gently repeated over and over again, I for once broke through a hitherto inviolable rule of mine. This was to let callers find out that "Leave letters next door," written on mine with an indicative arrow, was there for a purpose.

I opened the door. Outside stood a young woman

so fearfully overdressed, and yet seeming so dreadfully embarrassed, that curiosity impelled me to ask her in. I looked at her inquiringly.

"Do you want a model, sir?" she timorously asked.

"You are not a model," was my blunt reply.

Silence followed. I eyed her up and down. She seemed nervous and shy.

"I *was* a model, I assure you," she cried, "but not for long. I have never been anything for long," she continued, with downcast eyes, "but I am sure that if I could get a fair start to earn an honest living as an artists' model, or, indeed, as anything else, I should stick to it."

She spoke rapidly, and I could detect by her accent that she was an educated girl.

"I ran away," she went on, "and seeing you enter here, and knowing that you were an artist, I waited a little while and then knocked. The last picture I sat for was called 'Taking Sanctuary.'" Then she sat down and wept.

No man with any finer feelings can resist a woman's tears. As a man of the world I am hardened to most things, but even now a pretty girl in tears—well, I am still but a man. When this incident happened I was only a youth.

She sat for all the female figures in the story I was illustrating, which breaks off with the heroine as a nurse. It may interest my readers to know that the day she sat for this an acquaintance of mine, a jolly young hunting son of an old friend, happened to call. I invited him down to my studio, where he beheld the "nurse."

"Hullo, old chap, any one ill?" he inquired anxiously.

"No," I replied, "that is why Miss Blank is here.

She is a friend of mine; allow me to introduce you. Now, do you know of any one who *is* ill and in want of a nurse?"

"I know of an old lady who isn't ill, but wants—well, a companion. My old Aunt Eliza, you know. Miss Blank is possibly too professional for that job, and Bath is a dull hole, anyway. I live with my aunt, you know, and our house is a gloomy mansion with a host of servants, and therefore we cannot get any nurse or companion to put up with Bath, the house, or the servants."

"Miss Blank will try to conquer all three, I am sure," I replied.

And she did.

Within a year the aunt died, and within eighteen months Miss Blank was married to my caller, the nephew and heir.

A most amusing account of an artists' model was given in a song called "Mr. Galey," sung by the genial Academician, the

"SILENCE FOLLOWED. I EYED HER UP AND DOWN."

late G. A. Storey, at all artists' Bohemian soirées and smoking concerts years ago.

The last two verses ran as follows:

Now, if some fair and comely maid
You're anxiously expecting,
And o'er your disappointment you
Are quietly reflecting,
You hear a tap—you say "Come in,"
You think 'tis sweet Miss Bailey;
You turn and see the grisly beard
And squint of Mr. Galey!

For oh, he is an Artist's Model
Calling on you daily;
He squints and wears a sandy wig,
His name is Mr. Galey.

Now, having called, and called in vain
On Royal Academicians,
Associates and outsiders, who
All tried him in positions,
He sought some eighty unknown men
In moments unexpected,
The consequence of which was that
Their works were all rejected!

But yet he is an Artist's Model,
Calling on you daily;
He squints and wears a sandy wig,
His name is Mr. Galey.

My first studio in London was in Newman Street, Oxford Street, a few doors from Leigh's celebrated School of Art. It was in the rear of a large old-fashioned house in which many artists had studios. The one I occupied was the pick of "real studios"; by that I mean it was built for the purpose with a large window

G. A. STOREY SINGING "MR. GALEY."

on the north side of the house extending to the roof. Two others flanked either side of mine; one occupied by an Italian sculptor, and the other by a "dealers' artist," *i.e.* a pot-boiler. There were others upstairs in the main building. Mine was conveniently situated at the end of the entrance hall, and the large rooms on the right of that hall were a dancing academy. Fortunately for me this was only opened in the evenings. It was exactly the style of dancing academy described by Dickens in *Bleak House*, presided over by Mr. Turveydrop, senior. That was for children; this establishment was run for the instruction and recreation of shop-girls and young clerks in the neighbourhood of Oxford Street.

As I say, my studio was situated at the end of the corridor which ran side by side of this dancing academy. I fortunately left off work before the music struck up and the dancing began, but once or twice a week my studio was turned into an art academy of sorts. I never attended any art school as a young man, except for a very brief experience of an art school in Dublin, which I found imbued with the wretched South Kensington system of "teaching," and escaped before I had all my originality destroyed.

When I had settled in Newman Street, I and a few fellow-artists started a "life class" of our own, for our special study and benefit. My studio was selected, being a large one. I supplied the light and fire, and housed the others' easels and paraphernalia. The others paid the model three or four shillings an evening between them.

All went well for a time, but one night when we had got well on with our work and our studies from the nude were well advanced, our model disappointed us, so

no work was done. The next evening she had a bad toothache after sitting half an hour, and the next evening she turned up she had cramp in her leg. That also broke up our gathering early in the evening. So after writing a letter or two I put out the light in my studio, and I strolled for the first time into the dancing academy, purely out of curiosity.

A valse was at the moment in full swing, and I was nearly taken off my feet by a particularly lively couple switching round. The lady apologised. To my astonishment she was our model with the cramp!

CHAPTER V

STUDIO PARTIES AND THE HOGARTH CLUB

Rudyard Kipling's parents—Miss Walton—Rose Leclercq's birthplace—Studio parties—Music and gloves—Young Beerbohm Tree—Edwin A. Abbey—From eve till morn—The Hogarth Club—Sir James D. Linton—Fred Barnard and Henry Irving—Unlucky Friday

DURING the time I rented the studio in Newman Street I lived at a private hotel in Thavies Inn, Holborn Circus, presided over by a very charming lady from Staffordshire, a Miss Fildes.

I recollect when I was there meeting a very fascinating couple from India, Staffordshire friends of Miss Fildes. The lady was related to Burne-Jones and her husband was head of the art school at Lahore. They spoke a good deal about their little boy, and showed me a photograph of him standing on a chair.

Years afterwards I met that boy, and I told him how I had been shown his photograph by his parents. Had he been any one else I should have probably pretended that I recognised him by his early photograph, in spite of his beetling eyebrows, heavy moustache and spectacles, but, fond as I am of practical jokes, and audacious as I may be, I had not the nerve to pull the leg of Rudyard Kipling.

When I gave up my studio in Newman Street I moved

into Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, where I had the first-floor front as a studio and a bedroom at the back, and then I left Thavies Inn.

One day on entering my studio I found a very fine and charming American actress, Miss Walton, who had just come over in Sothern's company (" Dundreary Sothern " and father of the present actors) at the Haymarket Theatre as his leading lady. She had with her a manuscript written by a friend of hers in the States, and she wanted me to illustrate it and " place " it for her. She was enchanting, and I was sorry when she called to say good-bye. It appeared Sothern and she had a quarrel, and to punish her—this was the lady's version of the story—he cast her for a boy's part in the play he was producing, which she considered a degradation. So she left the Haymarket and returned to America.

MISS WALTON.

My rooms in Newman Street had quite a theatrical flavour. One day a carriage drove up and a typical middle-aged beau asked if he could look round my studio. I received him with pleasure, and as I naturally thought he was paying me a compliment and wished to see my efforts in art, I produced various ambitious works of mine in progress and placed them on the easel and chairs, but he never looked at one—in fact, he ignored my presence altogether. " So this is the room," he soliloquised, " this is the room. Ah, she is a charming woman—charming ! "

I followed his eyes, but I saw no angel of any kind floating about, so I ventured to ask the old fop what was the object of his visit.

"The object, sir, is to see this room, for I am credibly informed a lady I admire as an actress more than any woman I have ever seen was born in this room."

"No, the next room," I replied. "Her brother calling here one day informed me so. He was born there, too. He gave me a photograph of his sister Rose, which you will find on the mantelpiece."

Later on I made the acquaintance of Miss Leclercq—by far the greatest impersonator of *grande dame* for years on our stage—behind the scenes at the St. James's Theatre, and she was highly amused when I related the incident. She never met her admirer, and I never saw him again.

What fine times we had in our studios in those far-off days, to be sure! We cleared away the impedimenta of the studio of an evening and took it in turn to give a thorough Bohemian entertainment to our mutual friends, culminating at the time when the sending-in day of the Royal Academy had passed. The wiser artists escaped to the country for pure air and a rest, and only returned to town either to "varnish" their pictures on the walls at Burlington House or dejectedly take their year's work away. But we always arranged at that time of the year to have something on every evening and provide a simple and wholesome supper—plenty to eat, drink, and smoke, and the piano tuned for the occasion.

The fun usually began with some turns with the gloves or foils, followed by a song or two and recitations by the artist fraternity prior to the arrival from the theatre

SIR BEERBOHM TREE IN HIS YOUTH.

of our actor friends near midnight. I recollect a relation of mine bringing to my first "smoke" a young fellow from the City whose father ran a daily sheet, or sheets, for there was more than one edition during the afternoon, known, I believe, as *Beerbohm's Gazette*, published for the benefit of the corn trade. This was Beerbohm Tree, a tall, slim, reddish-headed, irresponsible youth, with his eye on the stage. At that time he played in amateur theatricals, but he was principally welcome for his very clever imitations of actors. In this rôle I think he excelled all others I have seen. In particular his imitations of James and Thorne in *Romulus and Remus*, a burlesque the present generation possibly never heard of.

TREE IMITATING JAMES AND THORNE.

Among those who frequented the gay Bohemian parties in my Newman Street studio was George Grossmith secundus, and many entertainers who were friends of the artists, and, as most actors and musicians are, always willing to risk their health in the thick atmosphere of smoke in the overcrowded studios; but of all those who organised these Bohemian orgies, I think that genius Edwin A. Abbey demands a special reference, for in his early days in England he made Bohemia fairly hum.

That delightful American artist was born in Philadelphia in 1852. He told me he supported himself when a boy by drawing, principally lettering tradesmen's show tickets, which he hawked round himself

to the various stores. Eventually he practised drawing, and before he was twenty began illustrating for Messrs. Harper Brothers, of New York. Harpers made him. They sent him to England, and although he worked in England until he died, becoming in time a member of the English Royal Academy, all his work went to America and all (or nearly all) his money came from there. Harper Brothers were his guardian angels.

His life was particularly lucky. He was paid extraordinary prices to do just the work his heart desired, illustrating the Comedies of Shakespeare, selections from Goldsmith's Comedies, and other fascinating "costume" periods which are the artist's, especially the black-and-white artist's, chief delight. In his illustrating work he was most happy and successful, with a particular charm all his own. We pardoned his absolute idealisations, his rendering Falstaff only slightly "stoutish," and not fat, and other such discrepancies. It was the *modus operandi* rather than his models which fascinated all lovers of black-and-white art. As time went on he painted—painted huge pictures of a decorative gallery to decorate the walls of American institutions, and thus, though it was not so successful as his pen-and-ink work, he became a member of the Royal Academy. Had he, however, only painted, he could never have been heard of in the same degree. It was his work as an illustrator which won him fame and fortune.

Personally he was the antithesis of his work, a Bohemian of the Bohemians. His "smoking" evenings, to which all the choice spirits of art, literature, and the drama were invited, were the "hottest" gatherings of all my long experience in Bohemia. They were unequalled as luxurious debauches, both in wit and wine. Once

his guests were in his house the doors were locked and unopened till "morning did appear."

I made Abbey's acquaintance at dinner in the house of a mutual friend, Linley Sambourne, of *Punch*. Abbey

E. A. ABBEY IN A BONNET.

insisted on my walking round his way before going home, to see some illustrations he was working upon. His studio was rather draughty, so he went into the passage and found an old bonnet belonging to his caretaker which he put on to his head, and while showing

me his fascinating masterpieces and discussing various Shakespearian characters, and quoting freely from the great Bard in order to explain his creations, he was all the time making me think that he looked more like "Charlie's Aunt" than the great E. A. Abbey.

The Hogarth Club flourished in the great art boom of the seventies. As the name indicates, it was an artists' club, and a thoroughly Bohemian one. I was not a member; in fact, I made up my mind at that early age not to belong to any art club. After a long day's work I could see no relaxation in talking shop, pleasant as the company might be! For artists, like actors, are so imbued with their profession, they can talk of nothing else.

Though I was not a member of the Hogarth, I was a guest at some of their annual soirées, which were invariably held just before the sending-in day of the Royal Academy.

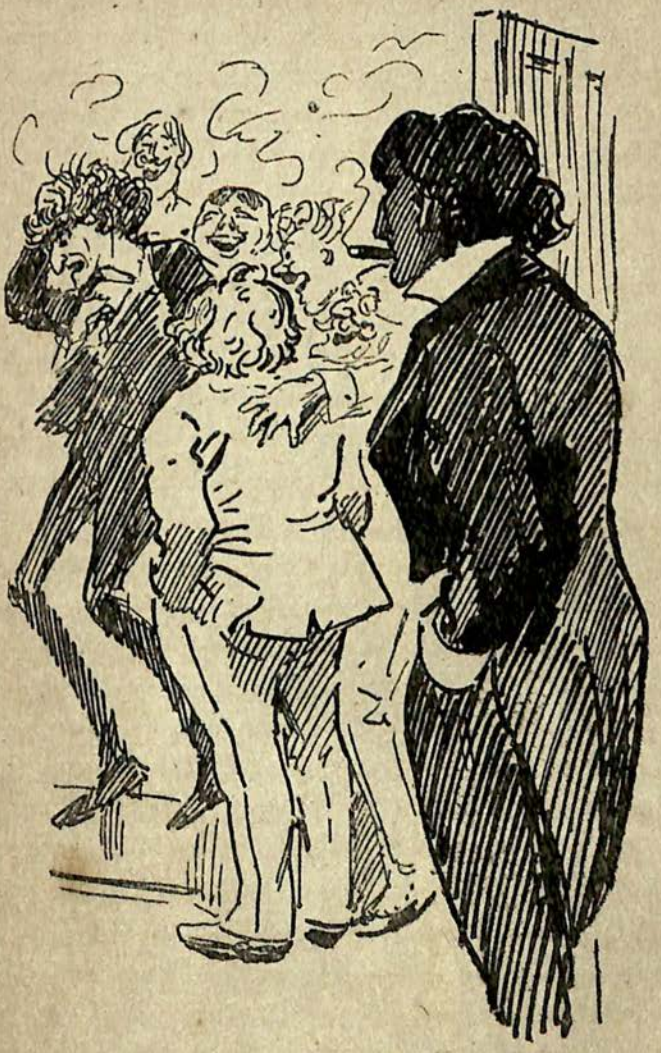
The member who interested me most keenly of all—both as regards his water-colour paintings, of a very high calibre, and his appearance, which was extremely picturesque—was James D. Linton. He was a typical Bohemian in appearance. His hair hung down over his shoulders, he favoured a Titian-shaped beard and moustache, a salmon-coloured tie and brown velvet coat; his eyes were intelligent, his face refined, and he smoked good cigars, which he handed round in a liberal fashion.

Irving, Toole, other actors and some music-hall "stars" turned up later to enliven the proceedings. One evening, just as Fred Barnard, the well-known artist, was giving his inimitable burlesque of Irving, Irving himself stalked into the room. It was immediately suggested that Irving should give the company a touch of the real thing, but he good-humouredly replied that he must ask to be excused, as he was tired—"tired of giving imitations of his friend, Fred Barnard, at the Lyceum." Irving did not take himself so seriously then as he did later in life, when he strongly resented these imitations.

At rehearsal on the Lyceum stage, a young actor, a fresh arrival, was imitating Irving behind his back when the great man detected him. "H'm, ah, come here, Mr. Snooks. I suppose you consider yourself clever, eh? Well, the fact is, sir, there is not room for two Irvings on the Lyceum stage, so you had better go."

When a young man I was acquainted with two well-known artists, both celebrated landscape painters of their day. Though deadly rivals in their art, outside of their "workshops"—*i.e.* studios—they were the best of friends, and even travelled together, like two Dr.

Syntaxes, in search of the picturesque, not altogether as companions, but in order to see they did not select the same subject for their Academy picture.



BARNARD BURLESQUING IRVING.

One of the two—I shall call him McGilp—had a deep-rooted superstition that to start a fresh picture on a

Friday would most assuredly result in some disaster. So that, should he through any forgetfulness, or by being led away by some artistic impulse, begin a picture on a Friday, he would, once he discovered his fatal mistake, destroy his work, however far it had proceeded, there and then. It so happened when taking their walks abroad these two were mutually struck by a magnificent view they suddenly came across. It was evident to each that the inevitable had at last happened—the rivals were to paint the same subject. With grim determination the two worked away. It was the supreme test to show the public visiting the next exhibition of the Royal Academy which was the greater artist.

McGilp knew that he was by far the better painter of the two. His rival was also conscious of this, and redoubled his energy and did all in his power to show his skill and beat his opponent—with the feeling, however, that the event would only make McGilp more careful and skilful than ever. For five long days the two rivals worked away in silence; each evening they carried their large canvases back to their lodgings and placed them facing the wall in the sitting-room they shared. The sixth day it rained, so painting out of doors being impossible, they sat down to write letters.

Now it so happened one of those tear-off calendars was on the mantelshelf, and before McGilp had to consult it, his rival managed to tear off an extra date.

After a time McGilp casually asked his companion what was the date.

"Why, let me see, exactly a week since we started our pictures," was the rejoinder, as he looked up at the calendar.

McGilp's eyes followed his, he jumped up with a

start. "Great Scott!" he cried; "then we began on a Friday!"

"If we did—what does it matter?" was his friend's remark.

"Matter, matter!" moaned McGilp. "Matter, sir— Here goes——" and he seized a knife and slashed the wet canvas leaning against the wall to ribbons.

His rival jumped up, and taking the calendar from the mantelshelf, said with assumed emotion: "I am awfully sorry, old fellow, but I have torn off a *date* too many—it is not Friday after all."

McGilp, in despair, picked up the mutilated canvas, for a moment or two gazed wildly at the fragments, then gradually his expression changed into a smile, and he slowly said: "I am awfully sorry, old fellow—I have cut up the wrong picture—it is not mine after all!"

CHAPTER VI

OLD TAVERNS AND DEBATING SOCIETIES

The old Albion—A sketch on a shirt-front—"Ape"—Henry Herman—Cabby's dismay—Frequenters of the Albion—Henry Sampson—Edward Ledger—"City of Lushington"—The old Cogers—"Budding lawyers"—In the very old days—A practical joke—A "sporting" offer—I take the floor

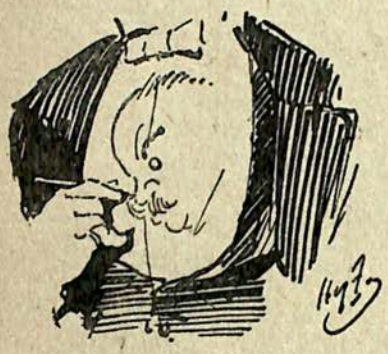
WHEN I first knew London the old Albion Tavern, directly opposite the north side of Drury Lane Theatre, was by far the nearest approach to the tavern of the Georgian period as regards its frequenters and the way in which it was conducted. Its old mahogany tables were beautifully polished and divided by partitions of mahogany; it had good silver, good fare, and good company. It was used by many men of good position. Having at that time no club, I generally supped at the Albion on Saturday nights alone, for I had few acquaintances; later I joined the Savage and the Garrick and the Beefsteak clubs, to find among the members nearly every one of the principal habitués of the Albion.

The first night I dropped in for my supper I was struck by the cosy old-time appearance of the famous inn. As I slipped into a seat by an unoccupied table I noticed a batch of celebrities at the next table, principally leading actors.

CARLO PELLEGRINI, "APE" OF "VANITY FAIR."

The room was very quiet, but finally the silence was broken by a murmur of amusement on the other side of the partition dividing my table from the next. Curiosity made me peep over the partition; I then observed a foreigner, a rather stout little man with hair parted in the centre, a moustache, and speaking with an unmistakable broken accent.

"You fellows, you stop quiet a minute. I give him not a glass eye, but a diamond one, see? Now you look in the mirror, quick, before he wake up."



APE'S SKETCH ON A SHIRT-FRONT.

The foreigner had been amusing his friends by sketching on a shirt-front an excellent caricature of a man at a side table who was enjoying forty winks after supper, the diamond stud in the centre of the dress shirt forming a very effective eye.

I soon found out from the waiter the name of the caricaturist; he was "Ape"—Pellegrini of *Vanity Fair*.

"I say, Carlo," said one of the party, "let (I forget who the wearer of the dress shirt was) —— show it to Herman" (the subject caricatured).

"What, you fool, you fellow!" jerked out Pellegrini, "what would you fellow be given 'im what you call, eh, affront!"

I knew Pellegrini well in after-years, and can say that that was a fair sample of the genial Carlo's wit.

The man Pellegrini caricatured on that occasion was

one of the literary men who generally wound up the night at the Albion. He made a fortune later as part

"AND NOW SEE YOU'VE DONE IT."

author of *The Silver King*—Henry Herman—and he wore a glass eye.

Once when I was relating the incident at a club—I think it was the Savage—Herman vouched for the story and moreover declared he was the hero. Also he, to use an Irish expression, "made light of his eye." On one occasion when riding in a hansom cab the driver used his whip so frequently and unprofessionally that Herman raised the trap on the roof and remonstrated over and over again, only receiving abuse in return and flicks of the whip directed dangerously near his face. Alighting, Herman held one hand over his eye and turned the other towards the abusive cabby. "Give me your number, you scoundrel; what is your number? I'll prosecute you for this. I told you you would put my eye out with that infernal whip—and now see you've done it."

Before he could utter another word the driver had whipped up his horse and, with a face the picture of horror, dashed away without his fare, whilst Herman smilingly replaced his glass eye.

Carlo Pellegrini—"Ape"—was the life and soul of the Beefsteak Club. He was an aristocrat, an Italian who, having lost his money, came to England and became famous as a caricaturist. Whether he made *Vanity Fair* or *Vanity Fair* made him is a question I need not debate. Thomas Gibson Bowles was certainly "Ape's" best friend, but he had many others, for he was a universal favourite. If kings of old had their jesters, clubs of to-day have their jesters too. Pellegrini was a club jester. Nothing he said gave offence. He said everything in such a quaint un-English way that every remark of his was greeted with a roar; as a caricaturist he was inimitable—it was cruel uncompromising caricature, beautifully reproduced and printed by Vincent Brooks.

Pellegrini was the Whistler of caricature, and of epigram or what was accepted as epigram, which, if delivered by an Englishman without Pellegrini's accent and foreign mannerism might strike one as rather coarse commonplaces. Pellegrini prided himself on never possessing a sketch-book; he said that he carried his impression of his subjects in his head. In that respect he was a conjuror, for when the poor fellow was ill in his rooms in Mortimer Street, and one of his club friends called to see him, and, discovering a pile of soiled shirts in a corner of Pellegrini's bedroom, began to sort them out for the laundress, "Ape" jumped up in his bed and cried:

"You fellow, what are you doing? You send them to the wash—never! They are my stock-in-trade."

On every right-hand cuff were sketched memoranda for the portraits he "carried in his head."

F. B. Chatterton, manager of Drury Lane Theatre when I knew the Albion, joined with two others the trio responsible for the pantomime: J. R. Planché who wrote the book and Beverly who painted the scenes. Planché's pen was always delightful, and Beverly's brush has never been equalled. But Chatterton was not successful. Chatterton had many skirmishes with his performers—he was probably the last of the bullying, coarse, ill-tempered managers. His pen, confined to the office, became delightfully ineffective; in fact it was he who said "Shakespeare spells ruin." But Shakespeare did not write pantomimes, and it was his failure in the great Christmas festival which eventually ruined him.

Among the younger members of the theatrical profession who frequented this inn-club, the Albion, was Charles Warner, who was then a "leading juvenile,"

and just as intense and self-conscious as in after-years when he became famous as Coupeau in *Drink*, the dramatised version of Zola's *L'Assommoir*, by Charles Reade. Warner ordered his refreshment with such fervour that it might be imagined he was demanding poison, and handled his knife and fork with the tragic gestures with which Macbeth might have seized the daggers.

CHARLES WARNER ORDERING HIS SUPPER.

I made the acquaintance of Henry Sampson—who wrote under the nom-de-plume of "Pendragon," and was founder of *The Referee*—in a peculiar way. He was standing at the bar of the Albion discussing athletics and propounding some theory on the qualifications necessary for running races, and he turned round to find some one who would serve as an illustration. It will amuse all who know me to learn that he selected me—I was then young and very thin!

"I do not know that young man," remarked Sampson, "but he would make a sprinter," and he pointed out that in proportion to my height—five feet two and a half—my chest development and my length of leg from hip to knee were, among other points, those of a runner.

Strange to say, his remarks were justified, for as a boy

I was never beaten in a race; I trained for running, and I loved it.

David James, who looked like a drummer or commercial man showing London life to his clerk, and James Thorne, were both meekness personified, though they coined money with their performance of *Our Boys* at the Vaudeville. Edward Ledger, the proprietor of *The Era*, known as "the Actor's Bible," smiled on the company. But Ledger has long discontinued his connection with the theatrical profession—I saw him quite recently at a club in the West End looking over *The Era*, in a very different environment to that of the Albion in the good old days.

Many years before I made the Parliament at Westminster my happy hunting-ground, I paid particular attention to the Parliaments in Bohemia, the best known probably being "Ye Ancient Society of Cogers," though the Temple Discussion Forum, held at the Green Dragon in Fleet Street, was in my early days in London equally celebrated, besides being older by one hundred years, and for a long time its popular chairman, "Old Ross," ensured a big attendance.

I was also early introduced into the "City of Lushington," and shown, among its many theatrical relics, the cast of Edmund Kean's face and also the jealously cherished dent in the wainscotting caused by Edmund Kean hurling a pewter pot at the head of one of the "Aldermen." This "City" consisted of the back parlour of the Harp, a public-house which up to 1902 stood next to the stage door of Drury Lane Theatre.

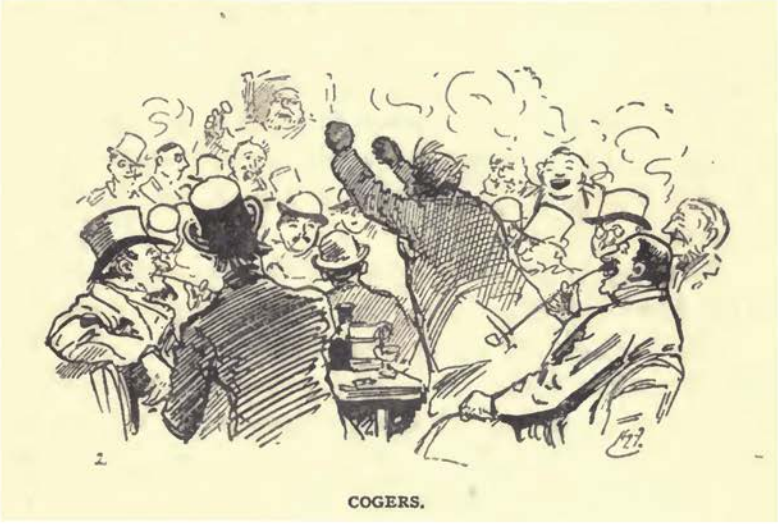
The famous Sheridan was placidly enjoying his pipe and his glass when the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, of which he was lessee, burst into flames, and the messenger

rushed with horror and distraction to inform Sheridan of the fact, and was quietly informed: "Well, what of that? Cannot a man sit in peace by his own fireside?"

EDMUND KEAN'S TABLET AND MASK IN THE "CITY OF LUSHINGTON."

I remember "doing" these mock parliaments very thoroughly in company with a charming American who wrote an account of them for *Harper's Magazine* whilst I made the sketches. It added greatly to my interest in the subject being able to compare notes with a writer from the New World, who, like all Americans of literary or artistic temperament, loved the associations of all these quaint old-time retreats of Bohemia in London. This article appeared in the late eighties, quite thirty years ago. I had been an occasional visitor to these Bohemian Parliaments for some time, in

particular to the "Old Cogers" before it moved away from Shoe Lane to its present quarters. I found them rich in character subjects, for among them were men of all ages, classes, and conditions, including well-to-do tradesmen, budding lawyers, newspaper reporters, clerks, and apparently a small sprinkling of artisans or petty



COGERS.

tradesmen. Also there were a good many whose occupations it would be difficult to guess:

> A place there is, not far from fam'd Fleet Street,
> Where youthful Whigs and brawling patriots meet;
> Thither the City spouter wends his way,
> To waste the night with profitless display.

There is no doubt the "budding lawyers" found the Cogers Hall particularly useful for the practice of speaking in public. I know that Sir Edward Clarke when he was living as a young pressman, and at the same time studying for the Bar (at which he became so famous),

found it an excellent place to study for parliamentary debating, in which he was equally successful. I am not quite sure whether Sir Frank Lockwood ever addressed the Cogers, but I know he had been there, for he and I were discussing the place one evening, and he drew these Cogers from memory. That such young men still find their mock parliaments advantageous is illustrated by the fact that the shining light of the last one I attended was the present Lord Chief Justice, Lord Reading. I think this has always been so, at least as regards the Cogers, for I came across a very curious account of the Cogers in a book published ninety years ago, in which it says:

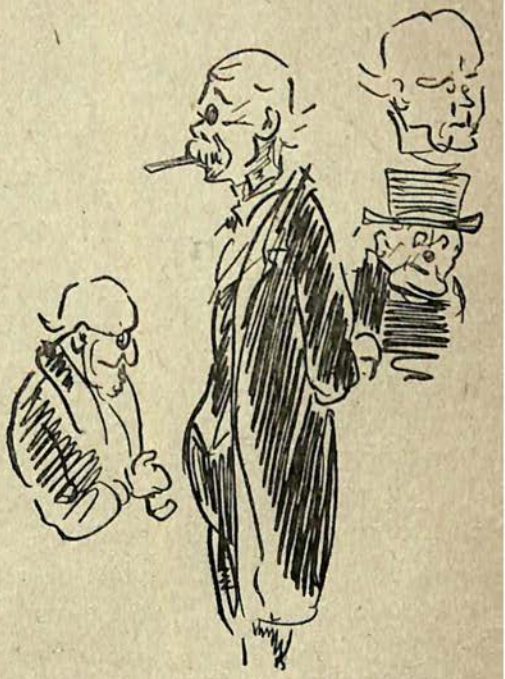
"Among the various convivial meetings with which this Metropolis abounds, none, upon several accounts, is more worthy of a visit than Coger's Hall. At most of the other places of evening entertainment, singing forms one of the principal attractions to the company; but in the Coger's Hall, political discussion is the order of the night, although it is somewhat of the noisiest kind, and although from the vast number of boisterous radicals who attend the room, nothing goes down in it but revolutionary sentiments and democratic toasts. Yet it cannot be denied that some of the most celebrated of our city orators have acquired their eloquence in that far-famed school of Cockney declamation; which, however, has degenerated into a mere bear-garden."

The Society of Cogers, from a prominent announcement over the mantelpiece, appears to have been first established in 1756.

While "My Grand," as the President is called, is in the chair, the Company, according to the regulations, one and all doff their hats, a rule which, I believe, is

not enforced in any other convivial meeting in London; but here it is not allowed to be violated for one instant.

Late one evening, as I was passing, I think it was Cogers Hall, or it may have been one of the other debating societies in the neighbourhood, I noticed four or five young gentlemanly dressed men, either students of the Temple or young medicos, speaking to a sandwich man. As board-men did not walk the streets in that neighbourhood at that late hour, I stopped to watch the game.



COGERS SKETCHED BY SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD.

"That is capital, Jack! You look fine. Keep yourself warm till the time comes and don't go too far away," I heard one of them say.

The others then entered the Hall, and I followed. A debate was in full swing and, as usual, some of the speakers were excellent, but they seemed to have no effect on the students, whom I was still watching. They pooh-poohed the speaker who was "orating," an old hand at this place, and interrupted him with cries of "rot," "bosh," "piffle," etc. The chairman's calls to order were of no avail. At last one of the students

said, "Pardon me, sir, but it is too much to expect us to listen to such twaddle. I'll make a bet with any one present the first man in the street to pass will, whoever he may be, make a better speech than this." A sporting-looking, bucolic-looking man rose and said that no bets

A COGER MAKING A SPEECH.

were allowed to be made, but he would meet the stranger's wishes at the bar outside. This was tantamount to the permission of admitting "the man in the street," who, of course, turned out to be the sandwich-man.

I must say the young fellow played the part well.

His assumption of nervousness and timidity was good, and when the subject of the debate was stated his rather awkward attempt to reply, and then his warming up (he was evidently prepared for the subject of the debate of the evening), and his eloquence and epigram,

THE BOARD-MAN.

given in his best Oxford debating style, electrified his hearers. After a really fine peroration the sandwichman sat down. The sporting man had his hand in his pocket ready to pay up—outside, when I thought the joke was a mean one and in bad taste, and I rose and for the only time in my life spoke in a place of that kind.

"Gentlemen," I said, "this is a practical joke. I am but a young man, but I like fair play, and the gentlemen who have spoken so well to-night have, I think, been insulted. The brilliant young man who has just sat down is not a stranger to the other young men, and furthermore, I, as an artist, can prove it. I have observed, as you all can if you look at the young man's shoulders, that there is absolutely no sign of any straps ever having rested upon them. Were he a genuine sandwichman the cloth on the shoulders would shine and show signs of wear."

The speaker who had been so rudely interrupted came to me and said that I had missed my vocation in life and advised me to study for the Bar (he was a solicitor, I believe), and in truth I often regret I did not take his advice.

I looked in at either the Cogers or the Green Dragon one evening with my friend, Richard Dowling, the novelist, and we were both hugely amused by a discussion on the rival merits of Dickens and Thackeray. Dowling was fond of recalling the following opinion quoted by one of the Cogers: "It's in 'is wonderful insight into 'uman nature that Dickens gets the pull over Thackeray; but on t'other hand it's the brilliant shafts o' satire, t'gether with a keen sense o' 'umour, that Dickery gets the pull over Thackens. It's just this: Thickery is the humorist, and Dackens is the saterist. But, after all, it's 'bsur' to instoot any comparison between Dackery and Thickens," which, after all, is a very fair specimen of the after-dinner oratory we were accustomed to hear in the discussion forums of Bohemia.

CHAPTER VII

FROM MY STUDIO WINDOW

Robertsonian comedies at the "Dust Hole"—Return to nature—My double—"Whistler" in the Circus—"A jolly good sort"—Family portraits—"Well caught"—George. Grossmith—The drayman and the nuts

When I came to London the Bancrofts were still in the old Prince of Wales Theatre, familiarly known as the "Dust Hole," and playing a series of revivals of poor Tom Robertson's delightful society comedies, *Caste*, *School*, etc.

The delight caused by these Meissonier-like pictures of English life in the sixties and seventies can hardly be conceived by playgoers of to-day—particularly if they have only seen them when revived. I know I took my own young family to see a revival of *Ours*, I think at the old Globe Theatre. Miss Irene Vanbrugh, whom they knew, was playing Lady Bancroft's part; I forget the others, but they were all excellent. The effect upon the rising generation was that the humour did not make them even smile, and the pathos made them laugh. Perhaps this was inevitable, for plays of this class go out of fashion more quickly than pictures or novels, and the public taste changes with the time.

Robertson undoubtedly understood the taste of his time. Sir Squire Bancroft, in *The Bancrofts' Recollections of Sixty Years*, writes thus of the generality of plays before he discovered Robertson: "Many so-called pictures of life presented on the stage were as false as they were conventional. The characters lived in an unreal world, and the code of ethics on the stage was the result of warped conditions."

"It was truly said," adds Sir Squire, "that the author of *Society* rendered a public service by providing an entertainment which suited their sympathies and tastes. The return to nature was the great need of the stage, and happily he came to help supply it at the right moment." This was true enough of that time. "Their sympathies," however, were mid-Victorian, and as out of touch with the sympathies of to-day as the songs and paintings of that time.

At a later period I frequently met a son of Robertson. His father had then been dead some years, and our meetings were always painful. He invariably started when he saw me, turned pale, and almost fainted. "Oh! Mr. Furniss, I wish you had never been born. I thought you were my dear father, and he had come to life again!" This happened so often that, as I had never seen his father, I asked those who had known him if I resembled the dramatist, and they one and all assured me that I was not a bit like poor Tom. Tom Robertson had red hair and a reddish beard, as I had then, but he was a much bigger man than I, and of Semitic appearance. So the "strong resemblance" seen by young Robertson remained a mystery.

In penning one's recollections of long ago it is curious how the mention of one name or one incident may lead

to another. The word "resemblance" switches me from Bancroft to Whistler.

One evening I was dining with Sir Squire Bancroft at his charming house in Berkeley Square, and seated next to me was Val Prinsep, the Royal Academician, who at once said to me, "I say, Furniss, is it you who has started the rumour that Jimmy Whistler has thrown up painting and joined a travelling circus?"

I had to plead guilty. This is a very good instance of how a small and very innocent joke may expand into an apparent fact of appalling dimensions. It happened in this way.

TOM ROBERTSON.

Sir Edgar Boehm, R.A., the most favoured, most delightful of men, but one of the worst sculptors of the Victorian Era, as one can judge by many of our public statues, had a charming daughter, who, when she married, was given as a wedding present by her father the house in which he lived in Sussex. Shortly after her marriage I rented that house for several months. My children were young, and I took them all to a travelling circus in the neighbourhood, and with them Boehm's married daughter and her young brother, both of whom had been brought up in the inner circle of the art world.

I was struck by a strong resemblance borne by a gentleman performing on the tight-rope to Whistler. So, in pure mischief, I said to young Boehm, "See,

that performer is a friend of your father's—it is Jimmy Whistler."

"So it is," cried the youth.

"Yes; your father will be sorry to hear such a clever man has become a member of a travelling circus."

Young Boehm was so interested and excited that I had the greatest difficulty to prevent him jumping into the ring when "Whistler" jumped off the wire after his show. In fact he urged the reason that "Whistler was one of dad's pals, and, as he knew him, Whistler would be jolly surprised to see him appear," but I did not give him the chance. That the youth believed he had seen Jimmy Whistler perform was evident by the manner it was repeated afterwards in art circles, and so finally reached my ears.

"WHISTLER" ON THE TIGHT-ROPE.

Sir Squire Bancroft, then Mr. Sidney Bancroft, had a personality all his own. He played the swell of the period in a natural, gentlemanly way in place of a burlesque (in the same way that Sothern's Lord Dundreary was a revelation). It added greatly to the phenomenal success of the Robertsonian comedies.

My studio, as I have said before, was close to the old Prince of Wales Theatre, and I frequently saw Bancroft passing by. I remember a friend being asked what he was like. "Oh, a jolly good sort for a swell, a sort of man who disdained dilly-dallying on the kerb, but

crossed the road under the horses' heads as if he wanted to get to the other side."

Some ladies were having afternoon tea in my studio when I saw Bancroft on the other side making his way to Oxford Street. I pointed him out to my friends, who were keen theatre-goers, but only knew the stage from the front, and they instantly exclaimed, "*That* Mr. Bancroft! We do not think much of him! Why, he is just the same in the play! We know many young men who, if they walked on to the stage, would be just like him." A remark which shows that true-to-life, natural acting was neither understood nor appreciated in the comedies of those days.

MR. SIDNEY BANCROFT.

The Bancroft Company at the Prince of Wales was quite like a family party. I ventured one day to remark upon the fact to a lady at one of my studio parties.

"Quite so; no doubt you are right," she replied; "we often go to see them, but why should the performers, if they *are* a family party as you say, put up large photographs of their sons and other members of their home circle for the public to gaze at in the vestibules of the theatres. *Young* Mr. Hare, for instance!"

This was actually a reference to a portrait of John Hare *himself*. Gilbert, his son, a capital actor of a later date, was not yet born; but no one who then saw Sir John Hare playing the wonderful old-men parts which made him famous could credit him with being so young an actor.

It was from the window of my Newman Street studio that I saw a "swell's" tall hat blow off and dance down the pavement. It belonged to Frank Dicksee, now the well-known Royal Academician, who instantly gave chase to it. The Dicksees, I may add, lived in Fitzroy Square at the top of my street.

Opposite to my studio was a French restaurant, and as it was not long after the Paris Commune several French refugees hung about it. The sight of this new silk hat twirling towards them caused great excitement. They all gallantly faced it on its wild career; one, braver than the rest, rushed forward and brought his foot straight down on the crown and struck an attitude of triumph.

In those days every one who wished to appear respectable, from peers to cads, wore the "silk hat," "tall hat," "topper," "chimney pot," or whatever one chose to call it. Although most men wore them, comparatively few of the lower class could afford new ones. "Bet you a new hat," was a common remark, and really meant, "Will bet you a guinea."

It was a fine but windy day, after a long spell of wet weather. The London streets were in a filthy condition. I was standing at the window when I saw a brand new hat carried by the wind into the roadway across to the other side, and a Pickwickian, stoutish gentleman dodging the traffic after it.

His hat came capering on, under the horses, and

between the wheels, uninjured. A seedy-looking individual on my side of the way stepped off the pathway to arrest the hat in its wild career, in the attitude of a goalkeeper in a football match about to receive the ball. The hat came right under a brewer's cart; in an instant the "catcher"—to use an American baseball term—caught it in one hand, with the other he removed his own shabby "tile" off his head, and placed it in some inches of mud in front of the hind wheel of the brewer's cart, and walked on. No one, I think, saw the incident but myself. The owner of the new hat was on the other side of the dray, waiting for the juggernaut of beer to roll on. There lay a hat as flat as a pancake, covered in mud. Thinking it was his own, the "swell" walked on to find another hat shop.

Mentioning a dray-cart reminds me of another act of remarkable quick-wittedness I witnessed.

It was the custom in the old days, before clubs sprang up in London Bohemia, to purchase during the walnut season nuts in Covent Garden Market, and to adjourn to a well-known establishment famous for its old port "out of the wood" served in "dock glasses." George Grossmith Secundus—father of the present actor of the name—was an inveterate practical joker. He was then *The Times* reporter at Bow Street Police Court close by, and one day, as I was in company with him, discussing our "Walnuts and Wine," two huge draymen were in the act of lowering barrels of wine into the cellars under our open window. The irrepressible Grossmith amused himself pelting the draymen with the shells of the walnuts, much to the annoyance of the giant drayman who had his back to us. "Blow me, Bill, 'ow's that? Where's them a-comin' from?" and so on. "G. G." was

GEORGE GROSSMITH.

delighted—shells, and more shells, unbroken walnuts, and then high-explosive laughter.

"A woa! above ther!" came from the cellar below. We then heard the rattle of the barrel descending precipitately; a rope flying round, and a man running—the pelted drayman had, in fact, spotted his assailant, who was at the moment seated with his back to the door quite unconscious of his danger. Grossmith turned round just in time to see the huge, bared arm of the giant drayman in the air, ready to descend with the force and fury of the angry one. We might never have enjoyed Gilbert and Sullivan's operas at the Savoy in later years if he had not, like a flash of lightning, held up his finger, and smilingly cried, "Port or sherry?" The sinewy arm relaxed. "Well, sir, thanks, I like port, I do. My pal outside, he is partial to sherry."

George Grossmith had many good stories to tell; one that always amused me was his story, which he related as a true one, of a costermonger who thought he would enjoy his holiday taking a walk through the West End. "Yes, Mr. Grossmith, I dress myself up spiff, and goes up Regency Street. I was a-lookin' at some photergraafs in a shop winder when a swell bloke wid a lydy on his arm gives me a shove and sends my 'ead clean through that 'ere winder. Did I cuss and swear? Did I use bad langvidge? No. I remembered w'ere I was, so with the blood all a-streamin' down my face, I rose my 'at graceful an' says, 'I beg your parding.' That's all I says, 'I beg your parding.' I crushed 'im *with breedin'*!"

CHAPTER VIII

SOME ODD CONTRASTS

When all were "boys"—J. L. Toole and Seymour Hicks at the Garrick Club—Revolt from inaction—Barrie's caution—"Old Bucky"—Tree and the limelight—Jekylls and Hydes—Maarten Maartens—A luxurious "shanty"—Irving's favourite supper

THE older Bohemia was pervaded with an atmosphere of perpetual youth, or at any rate an assumption of it. In Bohemia the old croakers and hypochrondriacs one meets at Buxton or Llandrindod were unknown. They were all "boys," but, like the stableyard "boy" of the old coaching days, the "boy" on the lugger, or the "boy" in a Kimberley diamond mine, some of them had passed the allotted three-score years and ten. To have only one score of years to one's credit and still to be one of them was an item of not the slightest significance. They were all "boys." Their motto was "Let us be merry to-day, for to-morrow we may be in the Charterhouse." This indeed was a comfortable haven of rest, but to gain admittance thereto meant being ticketed "old," and to be acknowledged decrepit meant ostracism as far as Bohemia was concerned. When I was a boy it was the pace that killed many and many a genius in the world of art and literature.

It is an unfortunate fact—and somewhat disconcerting

to one chronicling his experience of men over half a century—that boys will not remain boys, but grow into middle age before they can be placed in the portrait gallery.

Yet how well I remember young Forbes Robertson before he ever walked the stage, then an art student, sitting in his studio in Bloomsbury surrounded by fair

J. L. TOOLE AND SEYMOUR HICKS.

admirers; another artist, Weedon Grossmith, who has been known for years now as one of the funniest actors on the stage—alas! since I wrote these lines, poor Weedon is no more—and Bernard Partridge, who was an actor when I first saw him years ago, and is now a "veteran" on the staff of *Punch*.

I remember one evening at the Garrick Club J. L. Toole bringing into supper a bright-eyed, modest youth of the name of Hicks, who night after night sat next to Toole without uttering a word. Of those nights (and what de-

lightful suppers they were, too, in those days) Seymour Hicks writes: "What hours we used to keep! He (Toole) could not go to bed. I have sat up with him at a famous club (the Garrick) six times a week till five every morning month in, month out." Yet, in spite of it, Seymour Hicks has been for years the most volatile and delightful favourite of the theatre-going public.

Actors of the Seymour Hicks type came as a real relief after a depressing craze of "reserved force." Delightful Charles Coghlan—perhaps through his ambition being on the wane, or probably because he suffered from ennui—originated "reserved force," and it grew; inaction, long pauses, low tones, were considered force; it really was nothing but depressing laziness. I was seated in the stalls during one of those funereal tragedies—or were they comedies?—when some people in front of me rose from their seats quite seriously, and an old dame chaperoning the party remarked audibly enough to be heard on the stage, "Come, dears, we had better come again when the performers know their parts."

I mention in another place the first contribution of a young journalist who used me as a peg upon which to write a clever mock interview, and is now Sir James Barrie, Bart. When Barrie was producing his charming play *Quality Street*, he cast young Seymour Hicks for the young lover. Some one spoke to Barrie about the selection—"Seymour Hicks can never keep still, he is far too modern." "Ah, weel," remarked Barrie, rolling his head slowly, "I thought of that—so I have one of the officer's arms in a sling just to curb him a bit." According to Moy Thomas this could not be a new device, for he informs us that Coquelin denies that French actors gesticulated more than English actors,

for at the Conservatoire the professors repress gesticulation by tying the young actor's arms behind him.

In the old days actors and actresses looked upon the theatre as the thing, the whole thing, and nothing but the thing; for them music-halls, or whatever name variety houses are called by, were for comic singers, dancers, and acrobats. As for the kinemas—they did not exist. Now the actor plays in the music-halls and also acts for the kinema. Thus he has to alter his methods. He must speak up if he is to be heard in the halls; it is of no use lisping through a society play; he must study his action more if he is to succeed in the "movies."

THE MODERN ACTOR'S ENGAGEMENTS.

The more I look back upon the old days the more I regret we had not the kinema to perpetuate the old favourites and to hand down to the present generation their wonderful personalities and their perfect acting.

To all of us who recollect theatrical London in the seventies, Buckstone is a dear and valued name. Practically speaking, "Old Bucky" was himself the old Haymarket Theatre, notwithstanding that he had around him a fine old English comedy company. The public were brought to the theatre by the personality of Buckstone. The country cousins visited the Haymarket as they would, as a matter of course, go to see the Tower, St.

Paul's, Madame Tussaud's, and the other sights of the big city.

In my opinion this great actor cannot better be described than by saying, as all my readers who frequented the kinematograph shows a few years ago will know, that in personal appearance he was the John Bunny of the legitimate stage. I repeat, never do I witness a photo-play but my mind travels back to the plays and players of my youth with the regret that the kinematograph was not then in existence. Had that been the case the present generation would have been enabled to see Buckstone. That, as a matter of fact, is all that most people did in his later days, for the simple reason that one could not hear him.

I have written and produced many plays for the kinema, both in America and in England, and I found that, with few exceptions, actors, however good, cannot walk off the stage into the studio and expect to act before the camera at once. In acting for the kinema, Tree was at first hopeless; *Trilby* had to be done all over again, and the book was in fact eventually sent to me to be arranged for the kinema. I never saw the final production.

Tree wanted more space and less pace in acting before the camera. The lighting also bothered him; one of his company cruelly remarked that he was not accustomed to having the lights so equally divided.

It was always a joke against Tree that he had the most of the limelight directed on himself—which, from a business point of view, was no doubt necessary, but at the same time it had an irritating effect on those who were playing leading parts with him. A Canadian actor, who made a hit at His Majesty's and worked so hard that it

J. B. BUCKSTONE.

was declared the "steam came off the top of his head," ventured one day to rebuke Tree, who was "playing him off the stage," by remarking, "Say, Mr. Tree, in Nature, the moon is impartial!"

"Who's Who" of Bohemia would make an interesting volume. The most fascinating pages would be those devoted to the Jekylls and Hydes—that is to men, and I might add women, in art, literature, and the stage who have lived two lives.

In my early days I was one evening in the smoking room of a Bohemian club I had recently joined, where an artistic and clever-looking member with a fine head and long hair, wearing a velveteen coat and salmon-coloured tie of the typical artist, informed the room that he was starting in a few days on a tour through Normandy and Brittany, with his wife and daughter, and suggested there was a chance for any one to join his party of three.

The only response came from myself. I was then about one-and-twenty. I was living alone, had been working hard, and badly needed a holiday, so I introduced myself to the speaker, delighted to find such a charming companion. Moreover, he was an artist (he went in for modelling), and we could sketch together. His wife and little daughter were delightful, and I, thanks largely to my new acquaintances, enjoyed my month or six weeks' holiday immensely.

Returning to England, I was invited to visit his people in Kent, and found there a refined couple who had made their money in the City and retired to the country. My artistic friend, who was a writer as well as an artist, continued to carry on the business, but as he made such a success with his novel writing he eventually sold it. I

looked him up in the City soon after our Continental trip. He was a pork butcher, and was behind the counter cutting up legs of pork, and weighing out sausages. He

SKETCHING IN NORMANDY.

became one of our popular novelists, and enjoyed a very successful career.

Maarten Maartens, the great Dutch novelist, author

of "God's Fool" and other notable works, was one of the most interesting men I have met. Like his books, he was thoughtful and reserved, and penetrated with a keen sense of humour. He spoke perfect English, and gave pleasant little literary dinners at his club in England, where I met the shining lights in literature.

Maarten Maartens was fond of Bohemia and Bohemians. He made the acquaintance of some young painters, who were going up the river to paint landscapes, and Maarten, at their invitation, visited them. "This little shanty isn't much of a place to which to invite a guest," one of the hosts remarked, "but if you can manage the ladder, we have rigged up a bed of sorts, and you'll find the old roof well ventilated."

The famous novelist thoroughly enjoyed his sojourn with the Bohemians, and in return made them promise to visit him at his country place near Utrecht, in Holland. In due course the Merry Bohemians pushed into their Gladstone bags some things befitting a rustic country life, and looked forward to a few days in the writer's "shanty."

Arriving at their destination, they were met to their surprise by the author, accompanied by footmen in gorgeous livery, who relieved them of their hand-bags; and to their increased surprise there were waiting for them carriages with outriders in livery; the magnificent gates were flung open by liveried servants, and the path to the castle was lined with torchbearers, and their host, whose full name was Joost Marius Willem Van der Poorsten-Schwartz, lived like a prince at his home.

Once a Bohemian always a Bohemian; that is true of most men I have come in contact with. Sir Henry Irving is an example. He not only rose to the highest

pinnacle of fame in his profession, but he made it his mission to elevate "the profession" of which he was the acknowledged head and raise it from the depth of "vagabondism" to its proper place. Royalty and Bishops patted Irving on the back, learned societies and universities honoured him; he was equal to it all, and played the part so well that he in turn patronised them. But, in his heart of hearts, he hated it all.

The pose in public, though genuine in purpose, was but a pose; his heart was in Bohemia. I have frequently been in his company in the provinces, when he, at the theatre, and I, at some public hall, were doing our best to entertain the public, and later in the evening we foregathered at some supper function given in honour of Irving.

"Never mind," he used to say, as we were returning

to the hotel together, "we'll have a really enjoyable supper on Saturday." This meant Irving inviting me to his sitting-room at eleven o'clock or later, perhaps to meet one or two particular friends of his associated with the city in which we happened to be. On his way to the theatre Irving would purchase some chops, and on his return some baked potatoes from a vendor in the street.

Arrived at the hotel, he attended to the fire himself, and from his portmanteau produced a silver gridiron which our mutual friend Joe Hatton had given to him. Irving having cooked the chops, and procured the best wine obtainable and the finest cigars, we would make a splendid supper. That was Bohemian, and in that atmosphere Irving unbent and was at his best.

CHAPTER IX

MERRY NIGHTS AMONG THE "SAVAGES"

After five-and-twenty years—The "Busy Bees"—The delinquent member and the Committee—A Royal Savage—Sir Somers Vine—George A. Henty—His collapsible boat—Saturday evening entertainment—Dr. Farmer and Jowett—The S.O.S. signal—Crawford Wilson—"Fairy Fitzgerald"—Edward Draper—The Tinsel-period—Jealous and du Maurier—The Savage Club Ball—I censor a Savage Queen

TWELVE years ago I dined at the Mansion House as one of the guests invited by the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, Alderman Sir William Treloar, a member of the Savage Club, to meet his fellow-members. I had two reasons for accepting the Savage Lord Mayor's invitation. First, I was not invited because I had been a "Savage," nor because I was looked upon as a representative man for the others to meet.

I TAKE THE CHAIR AT THE SAVAGE CLUB.

I was invited because I had just previously done a little indirect service to Sir William in connection with one of his appeals on behalf of his Cripples Fund. For another thing I admired the ex-Lord Mayor as a man. Sir William is a jolly good fellow and a brick for fighting the bigoted Sabbatarians who object to people making our English Sunday endurable.

ALDERMAN TRELOAR.

Another reason for attending was the desire to meet some of my old friends. Over my head a quarter of a century had flown remarkably quickly; so quickly, indeed, since I had last seen the "Savages," that the auburn locks which were wont to fall over my temples when I sat on the Committee of the Club had to a great extent blown off.

I beheld a bald-headed, middle-aged gentleman, bespectacled as well, whom I remembered as a young singer from the Savage Wigwam, building up a reputation in Gilbert and Sullivan's operas at the Savoy.

"Hullo, old chap, how are you?" was my greeting.

He stared at me.

"You have the advantage of me, sir," he replied loftily. "I do not think I have the pleasure of knowing you."

I gave him my name, and incidentally a dig in the ribs.

"Good gracious, Harry, old fellow! Well I never! You fat, bald-headed old chap! Bless my soul, who would have thought it!"

And my old-time confrère was not the only one that evening who shook me by the hand without guessing my identity, and who was oblivious of the fact that he had grown older and balder with the passage of the years, even as I myself.

But the men who were even more interesting than my contemporaries were those who appeared old to me when I was a boy; and to hear Santley sing again, and Mark Twain retail delightful stories—almost as old as himself—made me feel young again.

There is no doubt the famous Brothers Brough started the Savage Club. It is truly said that if there had been no Broughs there would have been no Savage Club. Personally I think the title a mistake. In the circumstances the "Busy Bees" would have been a better one. Most of the members are busy bees, with a few drones thrown in, and I do not think that literally they have a Savage among them, a fact that was singularly emphasised at the great Savage Ball at the Royal Albert Hall.

I was a member of the Savage Club when it was housed in the Savoy, on the ground floor of a large block of buildings facing a graveyard. Some of my pleasantest memories are connected with those Savage days; they were not long, but merry. More than once I presided at the famous Saturday night dinner and sang songs and

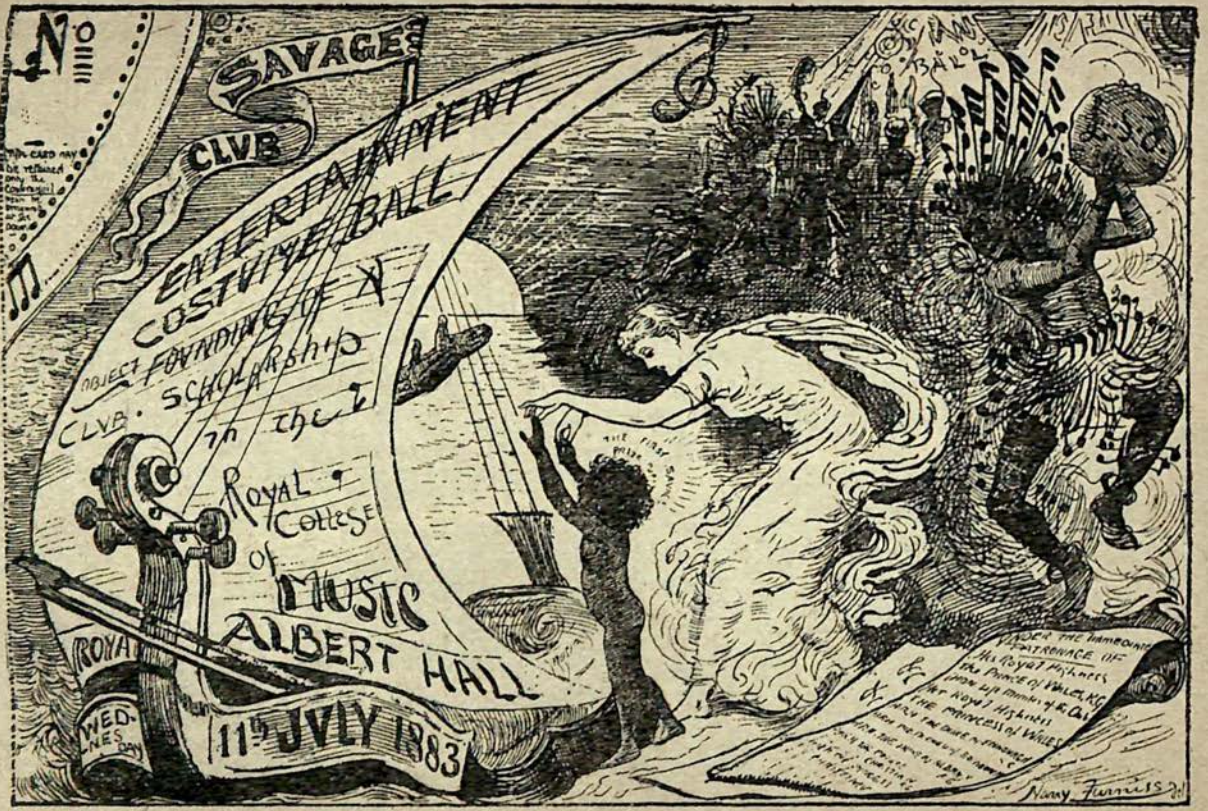
thumped the accompaniment on the table, and made the one speech of the evening, "Gentlemen, you may smoke." I designed a number of menus, or mementoes, for these dinners; I served on the committee, and before beginning my career on the platform I "tried it on the dog" at the Savage.

They were great days. Some of the original Savages were still members, and young fellows of my age drank in the earlier history of the Savages from them with much delight. There is no doubt that the wide river of true Bohemianism flows steadily through the Land of the Savages. There are other clubs of its kind in the backwater, but the Savage holds to a firm foundation, and I trust is still rippled with a little of its old eccentricity. In the old days some delightful incongruities happened, that could not possibly occur in any other club I have been connected with.

I was on the committee at the time the affairs of a certain impecunious but popular member were brought up, and we had to deal with them for the five-hundredth time. The member paid for nothing, broke the rules, and generally behaved in a way that had he been a member of any other club he would have been expelled without a doubt. After much consideration we thought it our duty to suggest payment or suspension.

The delinquent member's wrath knew no bounds. He called a general meeting, and the result was that his friends, absolutely ignorant, it is needless to say, of all the rules of clubland, passed a vote of censure on the committee. We resigned. And the popular member in question is still a member of the club!

It may be interesting to mention the members of the committee who were so ignominiously retired: Sir



MY DESIGN FOR THE SAVAGE CLUB COSTUME BALL.

Philip Cunliffe-Owen, K.C.M., G.C.B., C.I.E., was in the Chair; T. R. Somers Vine (afterwards Sir Somers Vine); Charles Kelly, the well-known actor who married Miss Ellen Terry; W. B. Tegetmeier, of whom I have written elsewhere; William Woodall, M.P. in the Gladstone ministry; P. T. Duffy, the well-known authority on chess; Edward Draper, solicitor, one of the oldest and most respected members; C. B. Birch, the celebrated sculptor and member of the Royal Academy; George S. Jealous, editor and proprietor of *The Hampstead and Highgate Express*; Herbert Johnson, of *The Graphic*, and an art war correspondent; William Hughes, the famous painter; Thomas W. Cutler, an old member and architect; John Radcliff, leading flautist of the Royal Opera; E. T. Goodman, honorary secretary, and a sub-editor of *The Daily Telegraph*; and your humble servant. These were the men turned out of office for asking a member to pay his club debts! I merely mention their names as the same committee who had signed the resolution asking H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (Edward VII.) to join the club.

A BOHEMIAN WHO DEFIED THE COMMITTEE.

I suppose that the election of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales as honorary life-member was the greatest social event in the history of the club.

The Harlequin who arranged this royal visit, and thereby transformed the Savage Club, was Sir Somers Vine. Vine originally, I believe, was in the business of Waterlow and Sons, printers, in the City. He was selected by Sir Sidney Waterlow, when he became Lord Mayor of London, as his secretary, and Vine acted in the same capacity to succeeding Lord Mayors for six or seven years, thus gaining an invaluable experience of men and things. It was popularly supposed that he acted as the medium between King Edward and the City in financial affairs. Anyway, he was very popular with King Edward.

Vine had a quaint way of saying things. I asked him in a chaffing way how he got his knighthood. "Well," he said, with a broad smile, "it was like this. I was walking about the grounds of Sandringham with His Royal Highness one day, and he said, 'Vine, would you like an honour?' Well, Harry, you could have knocked me down with a feather. 'A what, sir?' I said. 'An honour—a knighthood.' 'Well, Your Highness, I should be most happy.' That was on a Tuesday, and I was Sir Somers on Thursday, and that's all I know about it."

There is a story told of a very caustic wit, the popular member Baker Greene, barrister and leader-writer on *The Morning Post*, when invited by Sir Somers Vine to

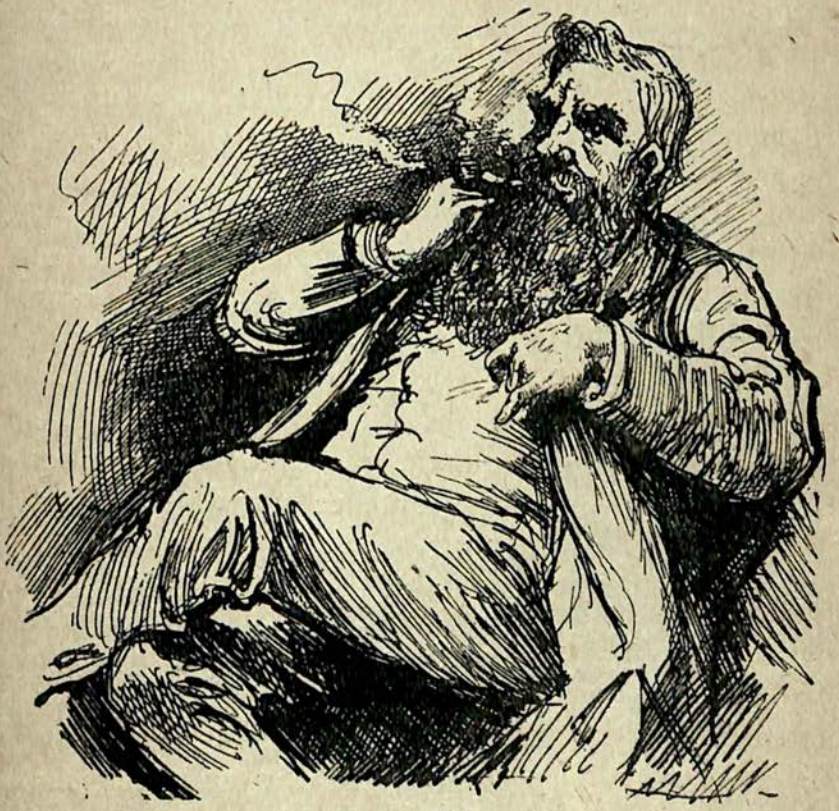
pay him a visit at his "ancestral" home, at Vine Court, Sevenoaks, replied, "With pleasure if I can manage it—but, I say, Vine, you have not given me the number in the Court."

Dear George Henty was perhaps the most popular member of the club in my day. His rugged, honest appearance and manner were thoroughly Bohemian; his gruff, deep voice and firm hand-grip endeared him to all. If the boys of Britain loved him for his annual war story, we grown-ups admired him as a journalist and as a club-man. Henty was one of the famous war correspondents in the Crimea, and it may be said that he always suggested the Crimea, for the war started the fashion of wearing full beards. Henty, in a military coat, was from top to toe a typical Crimean warrior, always enjoying the inevitable pipe.

He had a nature as simple as a child's. I recollect one day he came into the club in great distress. He must have been then about fifty years old. It appears that he had invented a collapsible boat, a boat that could be folded in two and easily carried. Well, in mid-stream it did collapse, and poor Henty had to swim to the shore. "When I got home I crept in at the back door. I did not mind the soaking or the failure of my invention. What did distress me was the fact that my mother did not know I was out, so pray don't say a word, any of you fellows, in the papers."

Henty, although the most genial of men, had his likes and dislikes, apart from politics, in which he figured as a strong old-fashioned Tory. He had no bitterness; certainly he entertained none towards any member of the Savage Club. There was a certain visitor frequently in the club—I do not think he was ever a member—a

very notorious Member of Parliament, J. B. Firth, whose mission in life was to mend or end the ancient companies of the City of London. The organisation he presided over had offices in the same building as the Savage Club.



GEORGE A. HENTY.

Both in and out of Parliament he harangued, tub-thumped, derided and attacked unceasingly the City Guilds, and in consequence I noticed that at every City dinner I attended Firth's attacks, without exception, caused much uneasiness. Firth was a cocksure, self-satisfied, egotistical man. He wore his hat balanced well

forward on his perky little nose, leaving exposed the bump of self-esteem at the back of his cranium, altogether just the man to get on the nerves of good old Henty, who one afternoon remarked in his gruff way, "I never know if that man is the Firth of Forth or the fourth of Firth."

The usual Bohemian concert or entertainment took place generally, as I believe it does still, on a Saturday evening. And in this the good nature of the Bohemian is extraordinary, his long-suffering and patience are phenomenal. For hours every week they will keep the entertainment going. Very seldom is there anything not worth listening to, from the opening piece on the piano to the solos on the flute or on the violin of some master of the instrument, before he departs to the Opera or the Concert Hall; or later on, when the beautiful voice of some practised singer charms the assembly as he sings in the atmosphere of smoke, and the fumes of whisky, some song that has an hour or so before charmed the public in the stalls. But it is easily seen that he has in front of him, hidden in the clouds of smoke, a more appreciative audience than he could possibly have elsewhere; so, in spite of the disadvantage of singing while the vocal chords are irritated by the weed, he protects himself by taking a puff from his own cigar between the parts.

J. B. FIRTH.

There was often introduced some new talent, just come to Town, perhaps to win over the critics and make many a friend; and without doubt an evening spent in a club such as this is more entertaining than all London's concerts of the evening put together. Men will run in

WHEN GROSSMITH FAILED TO GET A LAUGH.

to "do their turn" and rush off to their work again, and in this way some funny complications take place. I recollect George Grossmith singing one of his funniest songs, and not understanding the failure of the audience to appreciate it after the first burst of laughter. The fact of it was there had been another vocal humorist,

who left the room as he entered, who had sung the very same song!

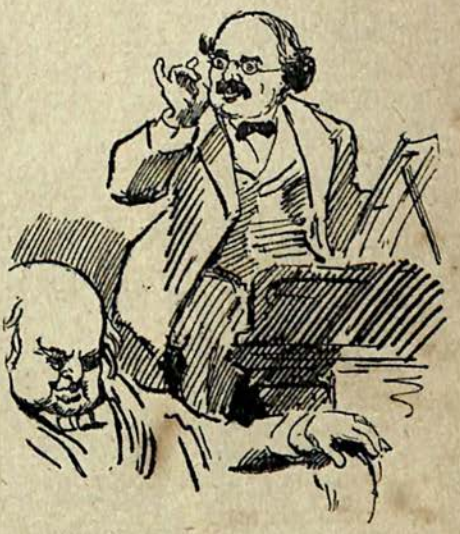
The theatrical members gave "a turn" before rushing off to their work, and if it was a late evening at the club, gave another on their return. Between the appearances of these professional turns arose the opportunities of the stand-byes or stop-gaps, and didn't they enjoy themselves too! These stop-gaps were, in my time, always the same; their repeated thread-bare strains were always met with good humour in spite of a lack of appreciation.

The music master of Harrow School, John Farmer, came first to the rescue (principally because he had to catch an early train to Harrow) with a kind of George Grossmith turn at the piano, more suited for a nice suburban tea-party than a Club of Savages. Farmer was a very entertaining man. He wrote the popular Harrow School songs. He was beloved by the Harrovians. He had the manner of a scholastic professor, but was at heart a true Bohemian. He was a great friend of Professor Jowett, and when Jowett was Master of Balliol, he induced Farmer to leave Harrow and settle down in Oxford. He had great influence over the young men, particularly those who had been Harrow boys. Harrow boys worshipped Farmer, and at Oxford his concerts were equally popular.

Dr. Farmer I knew well. I once spent some days with him at Oxford during the Eights week. He was never tired of talking of his "bies," as he called the young men, and I am sorry to say that although "bies" will be "bies," they will not be "bies" when they are college men, so Farmer was not either as popular or as successful towards the end of his career.

I remember his telling me that when at Harrow a circus

passed through, and the boys became very excited. In front, on a splendid white charger, rode the "Boss" of the circus—red and gold trappings, magnificent diamond shirt-stud—every inch a King! When he came up to where Farmer was standing with the "bies," the sedate monarch pulled up, jumped off his horse, and shook "John" warmly by the hand. From that moment Farmer rose high in the estimation of the "bies" and never came down to the level of an ordinary being again. It appears Farmer began life as a member of the troupe; he played the big drum and distributed the handbills.



DR. FARMER AND THE MASTER OF BALLIOL.

Men overtaxing their brains have extraordinary, eccentric antidotes.

Mr. Gladstone, according to Tom Catling, of *Lloyds*, when carrying on his famous crusade in Midlothian, tore himself away from delivering speeches and orations, to soothe and steady himself with music. The G.O.M. arranged with a church organist to have organ practice at a convenient time, and he was provided with a key so that he could enter the church quite privately and sit silently and alone "while the organist played over a number of familiar and impressive hymn tunes"; then with a "Thank you" he passed out.

One day at Oxford I came in to tea and found Jowett seated in Dr. Farmer's room, quietly tucked up in a corner, listening to Farmer's little entertainment on the piano, the same as he gave so often at the Savage. This was the great master's recreation.

Another of the Savage stop-gaps was an artist named Soden, a fellow of infinite jest and varied accomplishments. He wrote clever verse and recited his own pieces, but in spite of years of repetition he invariably broke down at the critical point of his extremely humorous pieces. I do not think he would have been half so popular had he remembered his words. The company would probably have resented it.

After him came a stout man with a bushy black beard and moustache, and a profusion of hair on his head. He approached the piano with a broad grin, as if the song he invariably sang, called "Twickenham Ferry," was all a joke. He was the clever painter of fruit and flowers, William Hughes, and was known as "Fruity Hughes." His voice seemed to be lost in his moustache and beard.

Crawford Wilson was for a long time an interesting figure in Bohemia. He was in business as a costumier, but his heart was in the theatre where at one time he, as an amateur, had "strutted his brief hour." Unfortunately he was never brief in relating his experience and dwelling upon its importance, and as he got older he—well, to put it plainly—became a bore. He was imbued with the "legitimate" mode of acting, and being endowed with a strong voice, and an Irish brogue, he favoured Bohemia on every occasion by reciting long passages from the legitimate drama. The At Homes in his house, near to the north side of Primrose Hill, were largely patronised by Bohemians. Among others I met

there were Karl Blind and his wife. The latter, like our host, had a voice and a passion for exercising it by reciting long, tragic pieces *ad lib.* It was said that besides being Wilson's friends, many were also the mantle-maker's customers, and one evening when, leaving, my wife and I got on to the steps of the house, I remarked to a friendly wit departing at the same time, "For this relief much thanks." "Hush!" he whispered, "Mrs. Karl B—— is just behind us! In fact one can say the mantle of Wilson has fallen upon her."

CRAWFORD WILSON.

Crawford Wilson on one occasion asked me down to his breakfast room to look at some theatrical portraits. As we entered, his parrot called out: "Hullo, hullo! you rascal, at it again?" then gave a derisive screech, and in a most marvellous manner imitated a corkscrew being applied to a bottle, the pop of the cork, and the pouring out of the liquor.

"You infernal rascal!" cried Wilson. "I'll be twisting your neck if y'do that agin."

It struck me the parrot was by no means the least amusing Bohemian entertainer I had heard.

Crawford Wilson was an old member of the Savage Club, and about him another and a very old Savage, "The Old Bohemian," Dr. Strauss, was fond of recalling a performance of *The School for Scandal* at the Lyceum Theatre, in which Henry J. Byron (the author of *Our Boys*) and Crawford Wilson played respectively the parts

of Joseph and Charles Surface. Crawford's Irish brogue was very apparent and puzzled the critics how it was that Joseph came from London and his brother Charles from Cork.

There was another well-known and respected Irishman, a popular member of the Savage Club, where I spent so many happy evenings, in their wigwam forty years ago. He was a picturesque old chap, imbued, like Crawford Wilson, with the traditions of the transpontine drama, and unlike the commercial and bearded Wilson, J. A. Fitzgerald looked his part. He had a mobile face, a twinkling eye, and his hair was long, thick and thrown back from his face, but not as thick as his rich Irish brogue. He was known as " Fairy Fitzgerald " from the fact that his work, both colour and black-and-white, was devoted to fairy scenes, in fact his artistic life was one long Midsummer Night's Dream.

When I was a constant contributor to the pages of *The Illustrated London News*, no Christmas number was considered complete without a page of Fitzgerald's dream fairies, and he was drawing the same subject before I was born.

In the Savage Club on Saturday evening he was one of the regular stop-gaps. If I recollect, he only had two turns, one a burlesque imitation of old-time actors, the other a burlesque of an old-time theatrical manager at rehearsal, in which h's were scarce and swear words abundant. The merriment caused by his supposed representations of old actors, Kean, Kemble, Macready, etc., was not as the dear old chap fondly imagined, but lay in the fact that they were one and all Fitzgerald himself. He sometimes introduced Irving into his repertoire, and a few other actors, to bring it up to date—

but they were all Fitzgerald. Of course certain limitations of articulation in very old men become very evident, and that I think accounted for the curious exhibition.

L. D. Powles, a very popular member of the club, a typical barrister of the jolly-good-sort-of-man-about-town type, who ran a society weekly, *The Tattler*, a revival of the famous old *Tattler* (with two "t's"), and subsequently became Judge of the Bahamas, filled up any gap in the Saturday evening entertainments at the Savage Club with his excellent burlesque of the summing-up by a learned justice.

Then one of the original Savages, Edward Draper, a solicitor who drew up the original rules of the club, gave a quaint recitation.

This popular member, with his ever-smiling face, was a familiar figure in Fleet Street and the Strand in the old days. He invariably carried a rather large-sized black bag, which contained far more entertaining matters than lawyers' briefs, for Draper was a collector of the old penny-plain-and-twopence-coloured prints of theatrical characters—a fact which endeared him to me, as I am also a collector, and am the proud possessor of a book containing every specimen and pattern of "tinsel" ever made. Beautiful works of art they are too, finely engraved, I believe by Wyon (the firm responsible for the engraving of the Seals of State).

Draper as a Bohemian and a member of the Savage

had a unique and unfailing characteristic, for no matter how gay or distinguished the company might be, at nine o'clock punctually he left the club, carrying his bag, believing and living up to that excellent maxim of "early to bed and early to rise."

The rage for tinsel pictures took place long before my time, in the days when Madame Vestris played in *The Green Bushes* and the palmy days of the "Old Vic."

A POPULAR SAVAGE.

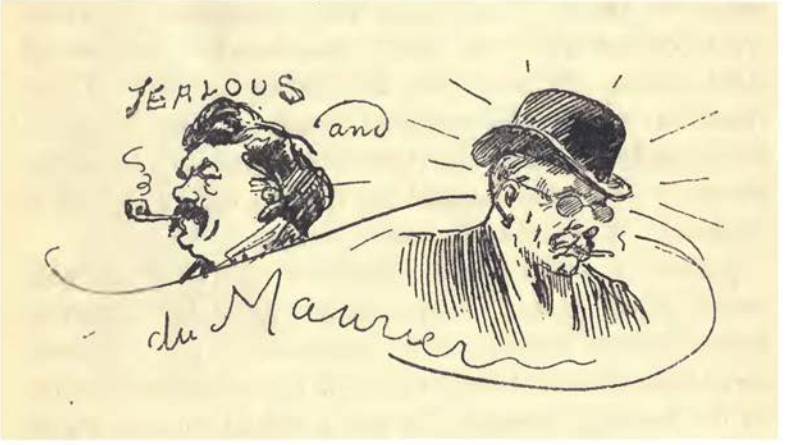
I was present, however, at the last performance of that famous transpontine playhouse, and witnessed the last "dog drama," a blood-curdling play in which the inevitable mastiff flies at the throat of the villain. Everything in the play leads up to this one incident, it might be in truth called the *raison d'être* of the play—and it was worth the money too! The part of the villain in this scene was generally substituted by the master of the ferocious hound, who had trained his dog, partly by starvation, I fear. This "actor-villain" concealed a nice juicy piece of uncooked meat round his neck, and at the critical moment, to the music of a full orchestra, the dog fastened his teeth into the meat; the man and he struggled all over the stage. The realism of the combat brought the house down, and the villain and the curtain simultaneously. That was something like a drama!

Edward Draper, in the second series of *The Savage Club Papers*, written and illustrated by the Savages and

published for charity in the sixties, and now exceedingly rare, contributes an article on these old-time plays, characters, and scenes of the tinsel period. The chief publisher was West, who kept a shop opposite the Olympic Theatre in Wych Street, Strand. The scenes were engraved by clever scene-painters, the characters were etched by skilful artists and were so well drawn that they frequently presented actual portraits. They were coloured by William Heath, a famous water-colour artist of the day. George Cruikshank designed and etched many of them. The large single-character portraits were covered with real tinsel, over inserted material of either satin, silk, or velvet, and finally framed. These tinsels are admired by artists of to-day for their beautiful workmanship. May, the theatrical costumier of Garrick Street, is an enthusiast and has quite a collection on his premises. But my collection is unique.

Jealous, the editor and proprietor of *The Hampstead and Highgate Gazette*, was a good type of the suburban journalist and editor, of the compositor type, a shrewd, level-headed man of the world, and quite a representative of the working Savage. He was a neighbour and friend of the du Mauriers, and more than once supplied jokes for the pencil of that aristocratic discoverer of Mrs. de Tomkyns in *Punch*. He looked up to du Maurier in more senses than one, for Jealous lived in the hollow of Hampstead known as the Vale of Health, and du Maurier at the top. Between them they had one thing in common, a cabman who supplied vehicles to the neighbourhood and whose name resembled Montmorency. On the occasion of du Maurier engaging this cabman to drive him to and from the Society functions in the West End, when the guests were leaving, the cabman, as directed,

gave his own name to the footman at the door. "The Duke of Montmorency's carriage stops the way," called the footman from the doorstep. But if Jealous engaged the same man to drive him to and from somewhat more plebeian gatherings, "Mr. Montmorency's cab is still awaiting," was called from the foot of the rank. Jealous was always full of schemes for new ventures in journalism. His latest was a penny *Tit-Bit* style of weekly, entitled *Love*, dealing with that magic word in all its phases. The author of *Charley's Aunt*—Brandon Thomas—and



several other Savages found the money to start it; but it was, alas! for love, and love was, as ever, fickle.

Jealous was one of the stop-gaps at the Savage Club gatherings on Saturday evening, and responded to the S.O.S. signal. When the entertainment seemed floundering, Jealous good-naturedly came to the rescue. He had not much to contribute, but he made the most of it. Very deliberate in manner, he insisted upon walking very slowly round the tables right into the centre of the room under the chandelier. Then he deliberately took out of his pocket some papers, out of which he selected a

press cutting about three inches long. This was an American humorous description of a critic's advice to an artist of the name of Barker, and this advice to Barker was read out, without exaggeration, for years with the strange effect that every one knew every word by heart, but Jealous himself!

The ornamental members that join these Bohemian Clubs of course only see the club life on state occasions when a special banquet is given to some particular guest. In fact, it was the introducing of these particular guests, the taking such clubs away from their surroundings, and making a public affair of these entertainments in public rooms, that has practically spoilt the home of Bohemianism.

When Mr. Gladstone visited the Savage Club years ago, it was at a big public function held at the Pall Mall Restaurant, with the Earl of Dunraven in the chair, and M. E. About, M. Got, Sir J. Benedict, some Members of Parliament, half a dozen Academicians, Delauny, Mounet-Sully, and other English and foreign celebrities among the guests.

After this the club never seemed to settle down in its quiet home, but was always bursting out into public dinners, as I have said before. The climax came when the Prince of Wales became a member at the dinner in Wills's Rooms in 1882.

King Edward's tact was proverbial. When Prince of Wales he was the guest of the Savage Club and became a member. He had a very difficult task in making his speech, so he wisely did not mention any names, with the exception of myself. I had designed the menu for that occasion. It was double and stood upright on the table, and was supposed to represent a row of the

Savages' tents, and on this peg His Royal Highness hung some of his remarks. After the banquet, which by the way was held at Wills's Rooms, the Prince asked me for the original drawings, which I subsequently had framed and sent to Marlborough House, and I receiving no acknowledgment, wrote to Sir Francis Knollys and had in return a graceful apology saying that he had been very ill. Sir Francis (afterwards Lord Knollys) had in fact been on his honeymoon, an irresistible excuse.

His Royal Highness having become "one of us," expressed a wish to see "the Savages in their habit as they lived," so we all adjourned to our wigwam at Lancaster House, Savoy, where the usual entertainment took place.

The greatest public function held by the Savages was their fancy dress ball at the Royal Albert Hall, held in July 1883, for the purpose of raising a fund, at the Prince of Wales's suggestion, to found a Savage Club Fellowship at the Royal College of Music. Over four thousand visitors and spectators were present. I designed the invitation card and acted as one of the three judges selected for the ungrateful task of inspecting all those who were in fancy dress on their arrival, in order to prohibit those who were in any way vulgar or objectionable.

One of those I had to censor was a very beautiful young lady, who came with her parents. They were Society people, who had gone to the expense of sending to the best costumier in Paris for a suitable and effective savage queen's costume. It had only arrived just in time, and great was the young lady's chagrin when I informed her that unless she promised to keep on her wraps and opera cloak, I could not admit her. The

"costume" was beautifully hand-painted and absolutely tight-fitting.

The ladies sat in a corner of the gallery all the evening. I chatted with them from time to time, but failed, I fear, to dissipate the only thing typical of the occasion, and that was their savage looks.

The ball was a wonderful success, and the talk of London. I made sketches of it for *The Illustrated London News*. The letterpress states: "The costumes were probably the most varied ever seen together, and many were remarkably artistic, accurate, and splendid. It was more than amusing to see respectable old Bohemians in war-paint performing the Buffalo dance."

TEGETMEIER AS A JAPANESE.

The most artistic and accurate costume of all was that of dear old Tegetmeier, as a Japanese; and as I began my notes on the Savages with Tegetmeier, it seems only just and fitting to close them with his name.

CHAPTER X

WAR CORRESPONDENTS AND SOME "SPECIALS"

"Billy" Russell, of *The Times*—Sidney Hall, of *The Graphic*—Melton Prior and Stanley—A new "Lord High Executioner"—Bennett Burleigh outwits Sir Garnet Wolseley—The Savage Club romancer—Archibald Forbes—Fred Villiers—I decline to become one—"Jumbo"—Blowitz—G. Smalley—Tennyson's pig—"The Bulldog of America"

WAR correspondents, both wielders of pen and pencil, who have followed the fortunes of battle in so many parts of the world, have all, with perhaps one exception, emanated from Bohemia. The exception was the first and the most famous—Dr. William Russell, familiarly known as "Billy Russell," of *The Times*, who, as I have before boasted, shared with me the honour of making a noise in the world at the same time, he with his famous letters from the Crimean War and I—in my cradle.

Russell owed much of his popularity and patronage to his Irish humour. He was always good company, and his ceaseless flow of stories, retailed in the dulcet tones of a rich Irish brogue, were greatly relished by King Edward, who, as Prince of Wales, made Russell one of his staff companions on his tour in India.

Not long before his death I was chatting with Russell

DR. SIR WILLIAM RUSSELL—"BILLY RUSSELL" OF "THE TIMES" IN HIS LATTER DAYS.

at the Garrick Club, and he told me of his first appearance at *The Times* office. He was a young man, and naturally in a state of excitement when the editor sent for him. On the strength of the summons he invested in a new hat, gloves, and boots, but the boots were uncomfortably small; by the time he arrived at *The Times* office and sank into a chair in the waiting-room adjoining the editorial sanctum, he could bear them no longer. Off came his boots, and, as luck would have it, just then the door opened and the great Delane appeared and invited him into his office. Russell had perforce to leave his boots in the outer room, but he sat down on a chair and tucked his legs as best he could out of sight. The interview was satisfactory, and when Russell rose to go Delane noticed his bootless condition. But Russell was never at a loss; he explained the facts of the case in his usual happy humour, and wound up his remarks by thanking the editor for giving him his opportunity "to make good," as the Americans say.

"Well," said the editor with a smile, "there is one thing you can always say, that you came to *The Times* office without a shoe to your foot."

I saw Dr. Russell for the first time at a dinner given in a private house. It was rather a large party, and Russell, at the other side of a long table, was, as usual, the principal talker. One good story followed another, but between these stories he, rather to my embarrassment, fixed his eyes upon me. I am a bit of a story-teller myself, but I was then too young and too modest to enter into the lists against the famous raconteur, yet the look he cast upon me suggested that he had an idea I should accept his gauntlet. However, my suspicions were incorrect, and quite wide of the mark. For

directly after dinner Russell came up to me and said, "I haven't taken my eyes off you all the evening, for I thought I was looking at myself all the time. You are the very image of what I was at your age."

I was then comparatively a youth, with wavy auburn locks and a small moustache, but I was otherwise clean-shaven and perhaps it was a little difficult for me to accept Russell's explanation, as he was then a grey-haired man with a grizzled moustache and stout figure.

Billy Russell became very crotchety in his old age. I happened to criticise the War Office in general, and Lord Wolseley in particular. Russell attacked me savagely in his *Gazette* for doing so, and I retaliated by sketching him as a toady tuft-hunter. Such are the amenities of journalistic life.

Among the artist war correspondents who followed Frank Vizetelly, the first correspondent to lose his life, of the old days, was Sidney Hall, who, from an artistic standpoint, ranked the highest of all. Up to his day, and in fact after it, special artists were little more than special correspondents. Like Melton Prior they gave a pictorial report of military matters. Hall struck a new line by giving human incidents of the picturesque side of war, culled from the leaves of his sketchbook, which appeared in *The Graphic*, then first making its bow to the public, much the same as "Ouida" did in her delightful stories of the village life in France of the Franco-German War, in her book entitled *Leaves in the Storm*.

Melton Prior was the reporting style of artist, and whilst Hall became an artist of home affairs, Prior remained the "Special War Correspondent" up to the end. He was an energetic, businesslike artist, with tremendous vitality

and a terribly shrill laugh. He had a large head, was quite bald, and was known as "the screeching billiard ball."

In spite of his vast experience, Prior at times showed a sad want of tact. On one occasion Henry M. Stanley, an old war correspondent and the discoverer of Livingstone, and Prior were guests at a large dinner. Prior spoke first and told a story about Stanley, who had acted as a special correspondent in the Ashanti War, and how they met. The story greatly annoyed Stanley, so in his speech he referred to his friend "without hair." Stanley was very proud of his, and it is said that in that long march of his to discover Livingstone, over a score of his attendants were exclusively engaged in carrying boxes, all through those strenuous travels, which contained nothing but hair-dye for Stanley. His excuse was that a grey head has no power over the natives.

MELTON PRIOR.

Writing of a younger generation of war correspondents it would be difficult to place any one above his fellows. They were all out to do their best, and, unlike the doctor, have had to rough it. I remember after the Soudan campaign the Savage Club gave a dinner to a number of war correspondents, for which, by the way, I designed the menu. Dear old G. A. Henty was in the chair, but of all the guests who were members of the club, only one remains—Fred Villiers, who has a fine record of war service; others were Bennett Burleigh, Charles Williams,

Phil Robinson, Melton Prior, and Hilary Skinner, of *The Daily News*, a curious little wiry man, with close-cut grey hair and a red face, a barrister, who, fortunately for the reporters of legal proceedings, preferred war to briefs, for

SIR HENRY M. STANLEY.

without doubt Skinner was the most rapid talker I ever came across in my life. As Mr. Aaron Watson has written, "he (Skinner) had a mind so brimming over with information of all sorts that it poured out its surplusage in cataracts of brilliant and amusing talk. It was with

difficulty that one followed such a rush of impetuous words."

I recollect sending a letter to the editor of *The Standard* by Henty—who was then on the staff, and who censored it—concerning a public sensation of the time, about a man, who, it was said, had been hanged in a blundering fashion. In my letter I suggested and proposed, out of pure humanity, that Mr. Hilary Skinner should be offered the post of Lord High Executioner, together with a substantial salary, for the very good reason that he would effectually *talk the head off* any living man, and in the pleasantest and most amusing manner.

All these war correspondents were men of strong character, and perhaps the strongest of all was Charles Williams. He was a talker too, but also a tremendous worker. For many years he represented *The Standard*; later on he became editor of *The Evening News*. "He was a man of restless, stormy, and combative temperament, driving at full speed, with something of the force of a hurricane."

Bennett Burleigh was another war correspondent of considerable force and a prodigious worker, and a man well equipped with that quality indispensable to all special correspondents—resource. I remember he told me how he outwitted Sir Garnet Wolseley, afterwards Lord Wolseley. I forget which "little war" was the one, but there was much excitement, speculation, and doubt about the plan of campaign, and the war correspondents at last in a body interviewed Wolseley in his tent. Sir Garnet was exceedingly kind and hospitable, champagne was handed round, and the general pointed out the proposed route on the map. The next morning the correspondents lost no time in taking it. Wolseley

reached his destination, which was not theirs, but to his great surprise found Burleigh awaiting him. "You here, Mr. Burleigh? You *here!*" "Yes, General, I listened to all your instructions and then, as I know you better than the others, I started off in exactly the opposite direction to the place you mentioned, and here we are!"

Phil Robinson, the well-known war correspondent, was the best liar I have ever met in my life, and I have come across a few in my time; but Phil Robinson was the most finished and accomplished. Lying with him was a fine art. He did not lie to deceive or injure any one. Every one who knew Phil—and every one in Bohemia knew that versatile man and liked him—knew moreover that he was lying. I recall many a Saturday evening after-dinner entertainment at the Savage Club in the old days, when the speeches and songs, music and recitations had occupied an hour or two, a good-looking, well-dressed, sun-bronzed man of forty or forty-five, with silvery, wavy hair and a grey moustache, and quiet movements typical of a refined Anglo-Indian gentleman, who had travelled much and had more than a nodding acquaintance with the wide wide world, reclining, one arm on the piano in the centre of the room, and puffing his cigar, and thus standing at ease would enchant us all for half an hour or more with some elaborate experience he said had befallen him in some far-off climes. He was fond of introducing some minute detail, generally scientific, and often dealing with natural history, for he was one of the best-informed naturalists of his day, and wrote delightful books on the subject. These stories he so graphically related made our hair (I had a lot to spare then), stand on end, and yet we knew that

clever Phil was making it all up as he went along. As a liar he was unique. His patter was high-class nonsense. Mr. Aaron Watson gives the following specimen of Phil's whimsical way, in his history of the Savage Club: "I was born at Clunar. It was a freak, I confess, and in an autobiography might call for some explanation, but I have none to give. The fact of my mother being at Clunar at the time may, of course, have had some influence on my selection of a birthplace. But apart from this conjecture, I have no justification to offer, except the proverbial thoughtlessness of childhood."

Archibald Forbes was by far the greatest of all war correspondents in the old days. I doubt if there will ever be his equal; the circumstances that led to his superiority were uncommon. He had served for five years as a ranker in the dragoons, had previously been to a university from which, by the way, he ran away, and began writing, and eventually became a journalist. He was a man of splendid physique, determined in character, and capable of literally fighting his way through to get "off" his dispatches, a task which in those days required much more resource than it did to see a battle and write its report. His famous rides are historical—relays of horses, no sleep or rest for days together.

In giving a picture of the ideal war correspondent, Forbes said: "He must be sweet-tempered, suave, and diplomatic, but big and ugly enough to command respect."

He was big enough certainly, but it is generally agreed that Forbes was one of the worst-tempered men of his day. He evidently kept his suavity and diplomacy for his private interviews with generals and their censors.

Forbes, "the most decorated journalist who ever lived," seemed covered all over with rows of medals and foreign decorations; in fact it might be said he fairly glistened with them. At a public dinner I could not resist making a rough caricature of him on the back of the menu as a step-dancer or professional runner, or acrobat of the kind seen in photographs, covered with more or less spurious trophies of his prowess. As this caricature was passed along the table, Forbes must have seen it out of the corner of his eye, for a mutual friend informed me afterwards that Forbes had been saying how much he disliked me. He certainly never spoke to me again, and as he was a very disagreeable man I was glad of it.

ARCHIBALD FORBES HAS 'EM ALL ON!

I have often squashed an acquaintance I did not care for by caricaturing him and giving the caricature to the man's best friend, who receives it on the condition and solemn promise he shall never show it to the caricatured friend. It is a far safer and more certain way of dispatching it to the right victim than addressing and registering the sketch at a post office.

Forbes was a Scotchman, but he had one joke. It is

recorded in the Life of the editor of *The Daily News*, the paper with which Forbes was connected. During the Russo-Turkish War a deputation of war correspondents with a grievance was granted an interview with the Grand Duke Nicholas; as they were going in, Forbes, to his annoyance, noticed that another Scotch correspondent was writing in a sketchbook, making copy of the interview while actually in the presence of the Grand Duke. This was too outrageous: "Do put that away. Can't you carry what you want in your head?" said Forbes. "I hae juist thought," said the other, "that I paid five francs yesterday for dinner which I didna put down."

Frederick Villiers, who has been in more wars than any other living correspondent, beginning with the Servian War in 1876, might be called the Forbes of the special war artists, as William Simpson, of *The Illustrated London News*, was the William Russell of the pencil of his time. It was he in fact who first started sketching on the battlefield. There are many names of those who at one time served as war correspondents, names too which would probably surprise some of my readers to-day. Among these may be mentioned Sir H. M. Stanley, the explorer; Stephen Crane, William Black, author of *A Daughter of Heth*, *The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton*, *Green Pastures in Piccadilly*, etc., and many other literary men of the past. I doubt if the man in the street discussing Mr. Winston Churchill to-day remembers that he was a war correspondent in the South African War.

I might have been one myself—but my chance came too late. In fact it is only three years ago since I was actually offered a commission as special artist attached to a battalion of kilted Canadians. It so happened that one of my three sons is in the Canadian Engineers, and

the other two are serving in Scottish regiments, and I figured myself appearing before them as I have depicted in the accompanying sketch—an apparition which surely would have had a more disastrous effect upon my sons than many of the dangers threatened by the Huns.

"Our Special Correspondent," the descriptive writer of the type of George Augustus Sala and Godfrey Turner, requires a special talent.

"I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ONE MYSELF."

Turner was the indirect cause of one of the greatest sensations in London. While in the Zoo one day, having some refreshment at one of the bars, he noticed the barmaid seemed sad and tearful. Turner inquired sympathetically as to the cause.

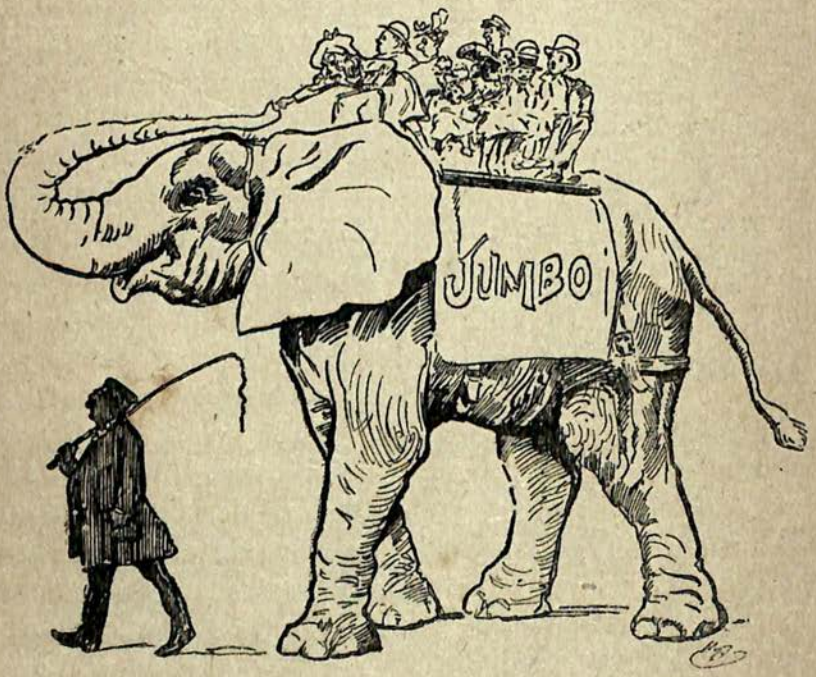
"Oh, sir, dear Jumbo, our biggest elephant, has been sold and is going away. The Gardens will not be the same without him; we are all broken-hearted."

Turner was touched, and he wrote a stirring appeal, which eventually worked up public excitement to fever heat.

"Jumbo" became the one topic of conversation; crowds flocked to the Gardens; ladies arrived in carriages with boxes of sweetmeats for "dear Jumbo," angry letters appeared in the press protesting against his removal,

leading articles were written, and a furious controversy raged for a considerable time, until his final departure for the States.

War correspondents only come to the surface when there is a campaign; for a brief time they enjoy the most exciting experience in journalism. They are "it,"



they spend money like princes and return as heroes; they appear on lecture platforms in their war-paint or in evening dress *à la Forbes*, their coats ablaze with foreign orders, or hanging from ribbons round their neck. They appear in the limelight and are then lost from view until the next war brings them forth again.

But there is another special correspondent, one who

serves his paper in peace-time and has the power to make war or prevent it. Among the latter number some of the most remarkable Bohemians on the press. It is their duty to root out thieves who are "in the know." They are, in a way, detectives of journalism, and, to be successful, must use every artifice which the wit of man can devise. For that reason they do not beard the lions of diplomacy in their dens, they only roar to bluff the world. The journalist's special duty is to find out the truth by circumventing officialism, and by meeting all sorts of "knowing ones" outside the official pale in a Bohemian way.

In the old days the biggest of these journalists in deed, but the smallest in stature, was undoubtedly Blowitz. He was the smallest man with the longest name: Henri Georges Stephane Adolphe Opper de Blowitz, the famous *Times* correspondent in Paris, whom I only met once. It happened when I first visited Paris with Sir John Staats Forbes—the railway magnate. We were examining the pictures at the Salon when I observed a very talkative, very tiny and elaborately got-up old gentleman going the rounds. "Who is that?" I asked. "Why, do you not know our *Times* correspondent, Blowitz?" "I read him every morning with great interest, but I never saw him before." John Staats Forbes—who knew everybody—stopped Blowitz, and I was introduced to him as a great admirer. "This is Furniss, our famous cartoonist. Let me introduce one little man of fame to another." Blowitz in all probability had never heard of me. He certainly looked blank, and snappishly replied: "There are small men *and* small men." "Certainly," I replied, "there is Marshal Canrobert sitting on the couch over there, and not far

from here is a great monument to a little man known as Napoleon."

On reflection, I didn't think there was much point in my repartee, but it served to set Blowitz blowing off verbal steam on the genial Forbes (he ignored me), and gave me time to study and sketch the odd little man. I subsequently discussed with Forbes a curious point. Could Blowitz—who was smaller than I—reach high enough to place his hat on a peg in a restaurant? I could just do it with an effort, but could Blowitz? The peg upon which Blowitz made his name and brought tremendous "kudos" to *The Times* was an account of the sitting of the famous Berlin Treaty Tribunal, which, in Disraeli's words, brought England "Peace with Honour" and appeared in *The Times* in spite of the strictest secrecy being maintained, and in spite of all precautions. There was no doubt Blowitz was closely watched. How was it done? It appears Blowitz dined every evening at a certain restaurant; next to him, but at another table, sat a minor official engaged at the Tribunal; neither spoke or even looked at each other. Every time Blowitz rose to go he took the other man's hat and left his own; in the lining of that hat were the secret notes of council of that day.

Blowitz was a Jew born in Bohemia. For several years he was a teacher of German at various French *lycées*, besides being a prolific journalist. He was a great friend of another very small man, M. Thiers, who at the time of the Franco-German War gave him his full support and assistance. He became a naturalised Frenchman and received the Legion of Honour. He was one of the first "interviewers," and supplied pen portraits, as well as the important opinions of the most prominent

HENRI GEORGES STEPHANE ADOLPHE OPPER DE BLOWITZ.

men, including Prince Bismarck. He at that time sent a most interesting and sensational account of a private meeting of diplomatists to *The Times*, but subsequently informed the editor it was purely imaginary—such a meeting had never taken place. The reply came that if he could write so well of something which never happened, he would be invaluable in supplying copy about matter which really occurred, so thenceforth he became *The Times* correspondent.

Another famous *Times* correspondent was G. Smalley, the first London correspondent to *The Tribune* of New York. He crossed over, and after a time acted as the New York correspondent to *The Times*, London. I met him frequently on both sides of the Atlantic, and once gave him a sensational headline. In one of my visits to America I was present at a famous dinner in New York. Seated next to Chauncy Depew was a man I had not seen before, the Chief of Police in New York, who rose to speak. Depew nudged me and said, "Here's a subject for your pencil—watch him." I could not help watching him, I never beheld a more ugly man. He grinned and showed two rows of the most aggressive-looking teeth: he was all teeth, oratorically aggressive, but brilliant in effect. It was the first address he made as a bid for a political career; he proceeded with his speech and I sketched him gradually being transformed into a bulldog, and these sketches appeared in *The New York Herald* the following Sunday. A few years later, when Roosevelt—for it was Roosevelt I sketched—was elected President of the United States, Smalley telegraphed over "The bulldog of America is elected President," so evidently my caricature was remembered.

I told a story, in a book of mine published fifteen years

ago, of Smalley, when over in England for *The Tribune*, interviewing or rather attempting to interview Lord Tennyson, the Poet Laureate; but as I did not then mention his name, I may be pardoned referring to it here. Smalley, who in those days considered himself a great dandy, turned up at Haslemere for the interview dressed in the pink of fashion; a silk hat of dazzling newness, light summer overcoat, lavender trousers, and patent-leather shoes. The Poet Laureate greeted him on the doorstep with a question: "Fond of pigs?"

G. SMALLEY.

"Why, I guess I am," replied Smalley.

"Follow me then," said Tennyson, leading him through the filthy yard to the pigsty.

"'Ain't she a beauty!—eh? a charmer!" remarked the poet as he scratched the back of the biggest sow, and added, addressing the sow, "You like interviewing?" (scratch). "Appreciate the honour, my beauty, eh?" (scratch). And turning to Smalley he held out his hand, and said, "Sir, good morning," and so the interview terminated.

Smalley was a very conscientious worker, and he insisted upon personally posting his own copy, no matter where he happened to be. Whilst on a visit to some friends in the country, who always sent their letters by

a groom on horseback to the post-office in the nearest village, Smalley, no matter how bad the weather might be, walked to the post-office and posted his own letters. One day the postmistress observed—at least, Smalley declared he heard the remark—"That gent must be carrying on with some lady, he must, or he wouldn't be so mighty particular about posting 'is letters 'imself." And as Smalley posed as a lady-killer he was not displeased.

CHAPTER XI

SOME MUSICAL MEMORIES

Opera "gods"—"A 'norrible tale!"—Foli and Foley—Emily Soldene in *The Grand Duchess*—Sir James O'Dowd—Patti—A triumph of song—Ragging a singer—"Teddy" Solomon and Sullivan

I WAS but a boy when I had my baptism of opera, or to be correct, my baptism of the opera audience at the Old Theatre Royal, Dublin, of that time; the "gods" were the self-elected directors of the evening's amusement. They were young gentlemen of the "'Varsity" who gained their position by a free fight at the gallery doors and up the stairs. Once in possession of the top gallery they divested themselves of their coats and waistcoats, which they hung over the railings in front. Oranges, eggs, pea-shooters, penny whistles were produced, and the "fun" became fast and furious. The sight of a white hat in the pit was their hearts' desire: cat-calls, personal threats, and, what was worse, missiles of all descriptions were hurled at the unfortunate wearer of that white hat. The orchestra might play, the curtain might rise, managers might come and go, but the row went on till the hat went out.

That was not all, for before the opera was allowed to begin, the "gods" elected *their* own singer to open

the programme. Mr. Crotty, afterwards a well-known vocalist, was then the "gods'" bright particular star. When he had finished the opera might begin. Sometimes the exuberance of the "gods" was carried to extremes. Little packets of cayenne pepper were thrown up to the ceiling, and as soon as the packets burst and the contents spread, a general sneezing occurred. Sometimes the police were obliged to interfere, and I recollect one night the students surrounded the "payler" (Irish for "peeler") stripped him of his uniform, stuffed clothes into it, stuck on the helmet and tied on the boots, and after a tremendous struggle called out, "Over with him! Chuck the payler!" and over the dummy policeman went. This sort of thing, after all, was only aristocratic larrikinism, or hooliganism, a boyish exuberance which, being vulgarised in time, lost all sense of fun and spontaneity. There were one or two incidents in these unruly proceedings not altogether unpleasing. For instance, the prima donna, if a favourite, would on the last night receive a present from the "gods," tied round the neck of a pigeon lowered from the gallery, and afterwards the horses from the favourite singer's carriage were unharnessed, and the "gods" dragged her in triumph to her hotel, to be repaid by a song from the balcony.

J. L. Toole was fond of telling a story of the "gods" in Dublin when he was playing the "Gravedigger," with T. C. King as Hamlet. No sooner had Toole stepped into the grave, warbling "A pick and axe," etc., than the gallery called out for him to sing "A 'norrible tale!" and kept on calling until the manager came before the curtain and made a speech drawing attention to the fact that the play was a tragedy by Shakespeare, and not a modern farce, and that neither the actor nor he could

THE "GODS."

From an early sketch.

desecrate the Bard by introducing comic songs; at the close of which the Gallery shouted, "Go to bed; go to bed!"

The favourite American actress, Mrs. Gilbert, in her *Stage Reminiscences*, includes an amusing incident that occurred during the performance of *Faust* in Dublin. Something went wrong with the trap that should have let Mephistopheles down to the lower regions. He stuck half-way, and all the efforts of the stage carpenters failing to move him down to the underworld, the curtain was lowered. A voice from the gallery shouted, "Hurrah! boys, hell's full!"

Signor Foli was a tremendous favourite: his real name was Foley. Strange that another Irishman, a famous sculptor, found that name good enough to retain and make famous, but that singers, actors, and variety performers, for some unaccountable reason, must needs change theirs! Foli sang in the first opera I ever saw, *Don Giovanni*. Then the opera season in Dublin was a short, merry, and expensive one. The two rival opera companies in London combined and went over to Dublin, so we had double "stars" (and double prices). It was the day of Titiens, the Bettinis, Nillson, Ilma de Murska, Campobello, the return of Mario to the opera, and others I forget.

"I go through" my operas, as the Americans would say, "pretty quick," and when I came to London I seldom went to them except to make sketches, finding the *opéra bouffe* much more to my taste.

How well I remember my delight—a delight shared by millions of theatre-goers in the good old days of Offenbach, witnessing that never-to-be-equalled *Grand Duchess*, when Miss Emily Soldene sang in it. Emily

Soldene was not only a wonderful actress and singer, but all those who have read her reminiscences must admit she was also a very clever woman, "a damn fine woman," as the men about town would say, though it did not always mean a pretty one. Soldene was decidedly plain, and her mouth was certainly the largest I have ever seen on the stage. I was making sketches of her in the part, and seated next to the dramatic critic of the paper we were both working for. I roughed in Soldene's face and then put my sketch down for so long a time my friend asked me if I was not satisfied with the likeness, which seemed to him a very good one. "It is not finished," I replied; "I cannot sketch the ends of her mouth till she turns her back."

MISS EMILY SOLDENE.

When *The Grand Duchess* was revived in later years, I cut the following paragraph out of some criticism—I forget by whom:

"'Very good: but wants Garlic.' That is the general verdict on the revised *Grand Duchess* at the Savoy. When an essentially French piece—French in conception, French in execution, French in music, French in spirit—is produced at the Savoy, it ought to be cooked *à la Savoy Restaurant*—not *à la Savoy Theatre*. It has been Cockneyfied up to date, and a 'Rule Britannia' composer has obligingly improved M. Offenbach's orchestration, for which Paris will be very grateful. Voltaire looked upon Shakespeare as a barbarian, and wrote a fricasseed *Othello*. Offenbach has evidently a great future before

him, but alas! the spirit of Offenbach's conceptions departed with him."

For many years I enjoyed the acquaintance of Sir James O'Dowd, C.B., late Judge Advocate-General, affectionately known as "O'D." O'D was a genuine operatic enthusiast—as keen a lover of the opera at the patriarchal age of three-score years and ten as he was in the days of his youth. It was a treat to listen to the conversation, when a friend had just returned from a visit to the opera, to discuss the performance with O'Dowd in the smoking-room of the Garrick. One of the shrewdest musicians assured me that "Jimmy's" knowledge of operatic music was truly marvellous; though, I will admit, it was his descriptions of the musicians and their personalities that charmed me most.

SIR JAMES O'DOWD, A FRIEND OF THACKERAY.

"Jimmy O'Dowd" could remember the first appearance of the greatest songstress of our day, Patti—and he was fond of recalling the incident. O'Dowd was a privileged visitor behind the scenes in the days of that wonderful manager, Harris, father of the even better-

known Sir Augustus Harris; and one evening old Harris said casually to O'Dowd, "Look in at Covent Garden on Monday if you have nothing better to do, O'Dowd."

"Why?"

"I have been rehearsing a chit of a girl this morning, and she enchanted me. She is not more than eighteen or nineteen, and has yet much to learn. She did not create the best impression at rehearsal, and indeed she may never be great."

O'Dowd went round to Covent Garden, and stood in the wings during the opera. The new singer did not take the house by storm, and when the curtain finally fell, so did many a tear down the pretty face of the trembling debutante, sadly mixing with the make-up. Old Harris, however, to the surprise of O'Dowd, rushed up to Patti and kissed her. It was the seal of her triumph, as facts afterwards proved.

Some years ago a disgraceful scene took place in the Albert Hall. Patti was unwell, but rather than disappoint the public, sang two songs. Her audience insisted upon encores, and as she was unable to comply they hooted and hissed.

I was mentioning this incident to Mr. Otto Goldschmidt, the widower of Jenny Lind, at dinner one night soon after it occurred, and he told me that his wife made a strict rule, to which she made no exception, that she would never take an encore. But there was the inevitable exception! It happened at Sheffield. Jenny Lind had sung her two songs and returned to be loudly encored by her many admirers for several minutes, with cries for "Home, Sweet Home," but Madame did not budge. Presently the audience, her husband informed me, raised their voices and sang "Home, Sweet Home"

in chorus, and sang it so well that Jenny Lind was touched. With tears in her eyes she slowly moved on to the stage and as the last verse started she sang it with them. The scene after this was indescribable, but these good musicians "cum fra Sheffield," and Jenny Lind said she had never heard the song so well sung before.

When we all were young men, practical joking was far more prevalent and far more elaborate than it is in the ranks of the rising generation. We spared no pains or trouble, and sometimes, I fear, carried the joke too far. I recall an episode in the late seventies. My friends had decided to publicly "rag," as the term is used nowadays, a singer who had foisted himself upon the public, a musical quack, a self-advertised, aggressively offensive individual who was—in a measure—the talk of the town. It was therefore decided to make his much-boomed concert ridiculous. A costermonger or two arrived early, to be refused admission, but upon assuring the box-office officials that it was their admiration for the photograph (then exhibited in every window) of the "greatest singer on earth," these cleverly made-up costers were given back seats.

George Grossmith posed as a lunatic, seated in the centre of the gallery with his keeper by his side, and in the middle of the concert-giver's most sentimental songs dropped into the sloping gangway below coppers, one by one, which rolled all the way down to the platform, or took side turns, coming to the feet of the audience. His brother, Weedon, sat in the front row of the stalls and occasionally rose angrily and asked those seated behind to sit down or he could not see the stage. But where was Beerbohm Tree? He had promised to join the merry band of "raggers." Possibly he would appear

as a foreign potentate in one of the boxes, or assume being a rival pianist—who had called for his fee—or, well, Tree was so good at disguises he could appear as anything.

When the fun was at its height he did appear—as Tree himself! He stood at the side of the stalls, and applauded the victim's singing. He turned an angry face to our funny friends, and cried out "Shame! Shame!" He then fetched a policeman and had two of the ringleaders arrested for disturbing the performance, and they were

removed. To this day I cannot say if Tree—forgetting the compact—was genuinely annoyed by the outrageous conduct of his friends, or whether he was not the greatest practical joker of the lot!

I recollect one Saturday evening at the house dinner of the Junior Garrick Club in Adam Street, Adelphi. Webber, an able man, but coarse and rude in speech, with a fine, handsome face, a bear in Bohemia who attacked every one, particularly those who gained a certain modicum of success. He interrupted a speaker who was referring to Sir Arthur Sullivan's great musical talent by bawling out that Sullivan was a fraud, and never wrote an original piece of music in his life. This idea I heard demonstrated on another occasion in another club by "Teddy" Solomon, a very talented composer, who had emanated from Covent Garden Market. This young genius had been, I believe, a pupil of Sir Arthur Sullivan; his light operas and extravaganzas at the Gaiety and other theatres showed him to be a not unworthy successor to Sullivan, but he died at a comparatively early age.

I have been present when he sat at the piano and began by playing familiar church music, and then, by degrees, altered the melody and time, working it into some well-known piece from Sullivan's operas. I am not musical, so I cannot say if this was a libel on Sullivan or not, but it had certainly a very remarkable effect.

Sullivan was not only a great genius, but a very popular and delightful personality. The last time I spoke to him was at the Clef Club, Birmingham; he had just arrived to deliver his presidential address at the Birmingham and Midland Institute. The same evening I was myself giving one of my lecture-entertainments close by the institute. Poor Sullivan was very ill. "Fancy me,

Furniss, fortifying myself with a lemon squash for the trying ordeal I have to go through this evening."

"It is a good thing," I said, "you had not to write your music for Gilbert under the same conditions."

"You're right," was his rejoinder.

It makes me wonder if we shall have any geniuses when the world is made "dry." I fear not.

CHAPTER XII

UPPER-CLASS BOHEMIA

The Amphitryon—Colonel North as Falstaff—A dear "snack"—Lord Chaplin—Ten-shilling Cigars—The Beefsteak Club—"Ape" and Lord Beaconsfield—Earl of Kilmorey

UPPER-CLASS Bohemianism had a pub—they termed a club—of their own, or rather a club-restaurant, known as "The Amphitryon." The chef, of European reputation, had been induced to start this in London by those extravagant English abroad who grumble about everything English when they are out of their own country. Well, he came—he served—and he charged! Did he not charge!

An old friend of mine, and an old "Savage," Thomas Cutler, a well-known architect in his day, built a mansion for the millionaire Colonel North, "the Nitrate King." The Colonel refused to pay the architect, so a trial took place before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge. I made a drawing for *Punch* entitled "Shakespeare and North, not Christopher."

"Colonel North is popularly supposed to have been the architect of his own fortune, but he does not seem to have profited much by his architectural knowledge when applied to house building. The burly Colonel—we forget at this moment what regiment is under his distin-

guished command—has met many a great personage in his time, but like the eminent barbarian who encountered a great European for the first time—St. Ambrose, we rather think it was, but no matter—our bold Colonel had to climb down a bit on coming face to face with

COLONEL NORTH AS FALSTAFF.

the Lord Chief Justice of England. What a cast for a scene out of *Henry the Fourth*! Falstaff, Colonel North, and my Lord Coleridge for the Lord Chief Justice. The scene might be Part II, Act II, Scene I, when the Lord Chief Justice says to Sir John, "You speak as having power to do wrong; but answer, in the effect of your

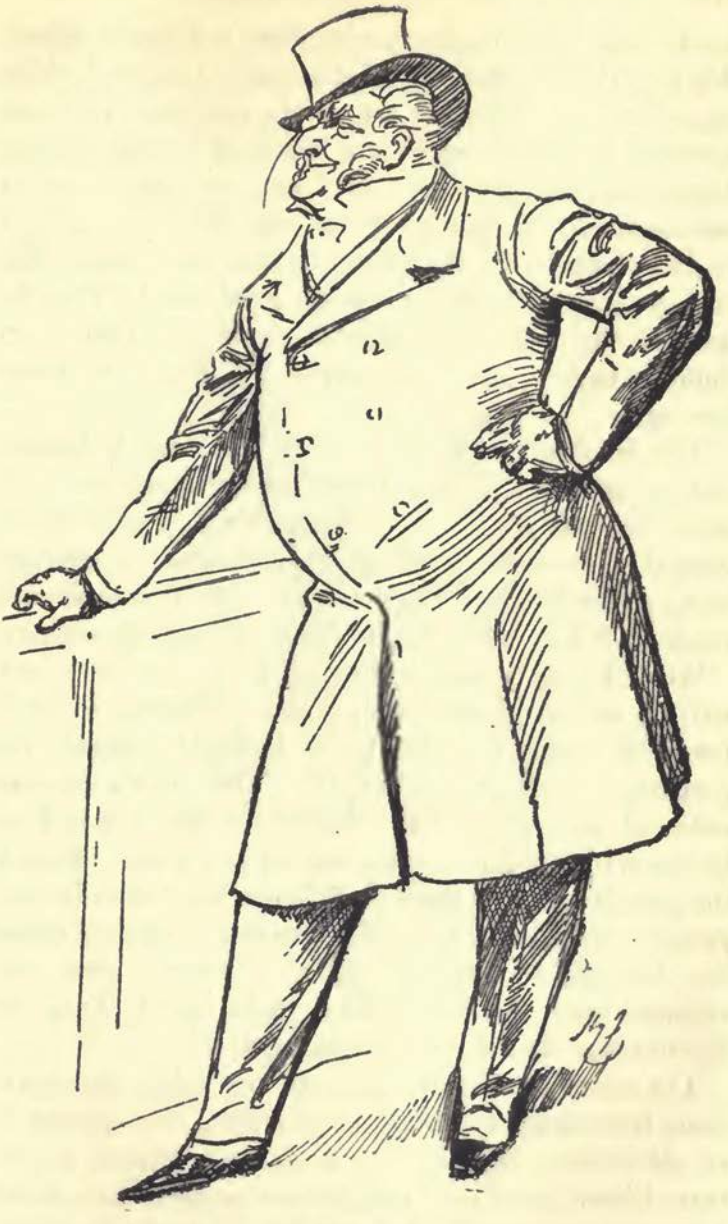
reputation, and satisfy the poor woman;" only for "woman" read "architect."

To celebrate his success in the action, Cutler gave a dinner, to which I was invited. Unfortunately I was that night giving my lecture on the "Humours of Parliament," in St. James's Hall, and wrote my friend Cutler the architect regretting that "I could not be present at the 'Cutler's Feast.'" He replied asking me to join the party after my show, and it was agreed that I should. Cutler's feast was, I believe, excellent. It was in a private room, and Cutler paid like a hero, like an Amphitryon in fact, for his victory; he was bled for his friends.

It was arranged that when I arrived I should have a snack in the restaurant below. I had a cutlet, a small bottle of claret, and a biscuit, and then joined the party. I forget what Colonel North's victor paid for the dinner I did not have, but out of curiosity I asked what my old friend had paid for my snack. Five shillings? Seven-and-sixpence? Eh? What? No! *Three guineas!* I was not surprised.

Another friend of mine, a member of the "Club," invited two friends to a "little refreshment" after the theatre. Two ladies and my friend—three cutlets, one bottle of champagne, coffee. Bill: six pounds ten shillings!

I dined one night with Henry Chaplin, M.P., now Lord Chaplin, in this "dear" little private room. There were present A. J. Balfour, Lord Randolph Churchill, and one or two others. The champagne was brought from our host's own cellar; the Waterloo port and the one-hundred-year-old brandy were also from his own cellar. But there was one thing our host did not provide,



LORD CHAPLIN.

for he was no connoisseur—he does not smoke cigars. We had the Amphitryon brand—long, torpedo-looking cigars wrapped in silver paper. It happened that our host and I went down to the House of Commons after dinner in the same cab. As I say, our host is not a smoker, thus the reason we had the "Club" cigar. I could not smoke it; like myself, it could not draw. My host, noticing this, asked me was it good—no? Then he confided—he told me what he paid for them—ten shillings each! The Amphitryon has closed its doors long ago.

The Beefsteak Club is perhaps the most Bohemian club in existence, besides being the most exclusive. It opens at four o'clock in the afternoon, and holds its general committee meetings at midnight. I enjoyed being a member for many years, and only retired from it when I left London a few years ago to live in the country.

When I first became a member it had not long been started, and was housed over Toole's Theatre, where it remained until Charing Cross Hospital bought the property to enlarge the hospital. There was a narrow, awkward staircase up to the club rooms, with a rope fixed by the wall to aid one in getting up and down. Such is the peculiar conservatism of Bohemia that when its new premises were built, with no limitations regarding space, the Beefsteakers insisted upon a narrow door and awkward stairs and a rope fixed to the wall! Even the interior was copied as closely as possible.

The members all sit at one large long table, and everything is arranged to resemble a charming dining-room in an old country house. The company consisted, all the years I knew it, of the most interesting men about town. The cuisine was of the best, and Savarin might have been

its chef. It had a president, but there was nothing formal or orthodox about the position. So fascinating was the company I have often "looked in" at the club to "get some dinner," intending afterwards to meet my family at the theatre, and found myself still dining at eleven o'clock and barely time to fetch my family from the theatre.

"APE" CATCHING THE LAST OF BEACONSFIELD.

It was said that if one heard a good new story it would be necessary to jump into a hansom and rush to the Beefsteak, otherwise it would be there before you. Pellegrini, the celebrated *Vanity Fair* caricaturist, was its bright particular star in its early days; the Duke of Beaufort, Sir Henry de Bathe—the Beefsteak B's alone would fill a page, so why mention names? Members

of both Houses of Parliament, the diplomatic service, sport, literature, art, the drama, law, and science were all brilliantly represented. No strangers were ever admitted.

Lord Rowton, so well known as Monty Corry, was a familiar figure at the Beefsteak. He was official companion to Lord Beaconsfield, and seemed to us when he arrived at the club to dinner to be always in high effervescent spirits. Yet Sir Squire Bancroft tells us that when he and Rowton were walking home one night from the Beefsteak, he stopped suddenly and said reflectively, "The whole of my life seems to have been passed in holding my tongue."

The caricaturist Pellegrini appealed to "Monty" to try to persuade Beaconsfield to sit to him for *Vanity Fair*.

"Can't be done, Carlo!" was the reply. "But I'll trot him out of doors for you to-morrow, and walk him up and down till you have made your sketch, and he will be none the wiser."

And that was how it was done.

The Marquess of Granby of those days was an aristocratic Bohemian, with a leaning towards the stage, and so was the late Earl of Kilmorey, with a practical interest as a landlord of theatres and a producer of stage plays. When I met him last he was interested in another sort of stage many, many miles away from the Strand, London. It was at Adelaide, in Australia, where it was proposed to build a harbour and landing stage, which is, I believe, still badly required. As I stood talking to him of the Garrick and Beefsteak Clubs in which we were in the habit of meeting, I thought how strange he looked in oilskins and seafaring boots after the familiar man-about-town get-up in London Bohemia!

THE EARL OF KILMOREY.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME NOTABLE "FIRST NIGHTS" AND OTHER THINGS THEATRICAL

Two houses a night—*Macbeth*—Public and private performance—Signor Salvini—*Trelawny of the Wells*—Toole and the nuts—"An overgrown Cupid"—The Colonel—My huge poster—An elaborate practical joke—Anne Mie—The Alhambra laundry—Jacobi—Miss Terry in *The Cup*—Irving as Iago—Cutting the Baddeley Cake

For many years I was on the first-night list, and with few exceptions witnessed all the more important productions, a record that was broken at last by my "lecture" tours when I was travelling the provinces, America, and the Colonies.

I have been such an ardent playgoer that I have actually seen on one night two whole plays, played simultaneously in two separate theatres. It was a mere coincidence, not done for a wager, and any one could have laid any odds against my success had I thought of it in time, and, I may add, had I been a betting man; as a matter of fact I never made a bet in my life.

It occurred in this way. I had seats on the same night for a performance at the Haymarket and at His Majesty's. I had friends in both plays. I saw one scene at His Majesty's, crossed the road, saw the first scene at the Haymarket, and so on. It so happened that

the acts fitted in. The acts were fewer at the Haymarket and the waits were longer. But I got the two plays so inextricably mixed that I never tried the experiment again.

The first night of Tennyson's *Promise of May* at the Lyceum was almost wrecked by one unfortunate line which, by some extraordinary oversight, had survived readings and rehearsals. The same night, by the way the Marquess of Queensberry created a scene by addressing the audience from a box.

SEEING TWO PLAYS IN ONE EVENING.

On the first night of *Ravenswood* the curtain rose so quickly on the second act that Irving was discovered running across the stage, calling out to the supers, and hanging on to the end of a piece of vanishing scenery.

The first night of Wilson Barrett's *Hamlet*, and, for the matter of that, Tree's also, were nights to remember! It was on the latter occasion that a wit remarked that a conclusive way to settle the vexed question whether Shakespeare or Bacon wrote the play was to see if Shakespeare had turned in his grave.

I was particularly struck with the first night of *Macbeth* at the Lyceum. Irving was a failure in the part from

the moment he entered. His reading was wrong: no doubt from a student's point of view it was right to make Macbeth a weak coward, but from a theatrical point of view it was wrong. He had no stuffing in him, and the

IRVING RECITES MACBETH.

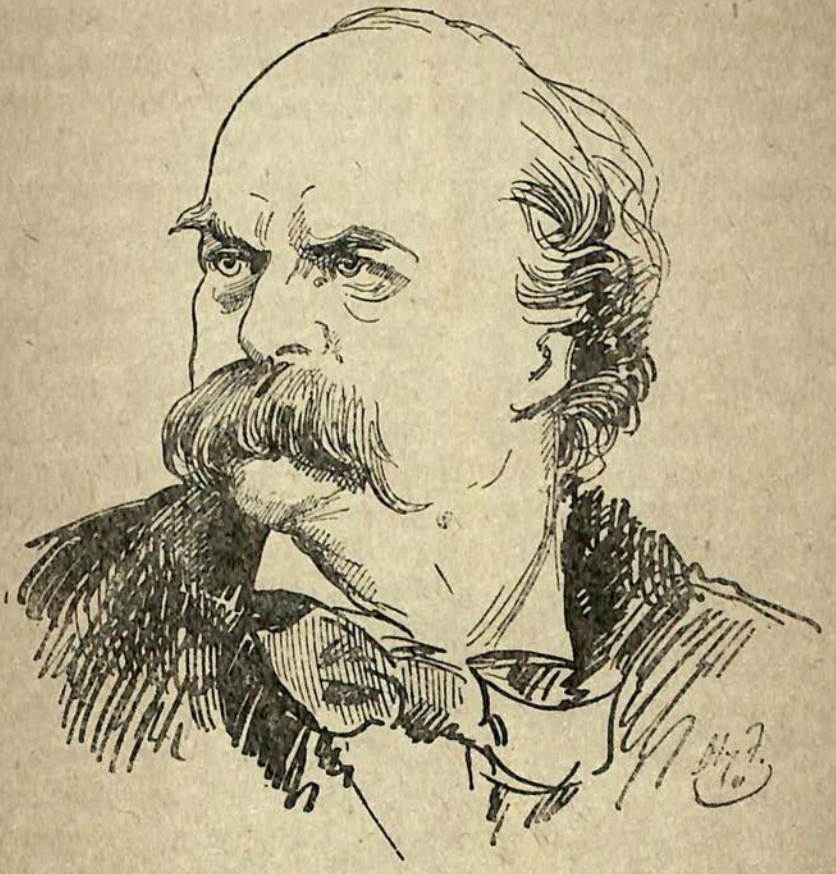
audience felt they had none either. Miss Terry acted to a certain extent as an antidote—she was not Lady Macbeth, but that didn't matter—she was a woman. Irving's Macbeth could hardly be termed a man. In fact, Irving's Macbeth had not a redeeming feature; neither did it interest me. But I had a great awakening later.

IRVING AS MACBETH.

It was in Scotland. I was lecturing, Irving playing Macbeth. We met at supper in Irving's rooms, five or six of us, quite a little private affair, including a celebrated Scotch critic. Naturally the conversation turned upon Irving's rendering of the part. The Scotchman took exception to it; Macbeth may have been a blackguard, but he was no coward. This roused Irving; he neglected his supper, and recited long passages of the play to confirm his opinion. The Scotch critic barely got in a word, and then he only inflamed Irving to greater exertions. I never saw Irving to better advantage. It was an intellectual treat, and for the time I firmly believed that Irving was right, and all other actors wrong. I thought this conscientiously—until I saw him play it again on the stage, and then I changed my mind again.

Perhaps the greatest first night I remember was the appearance of Signor Salvini, the greatest actor I ever saw, as Othello at Drury Lane Theatre in April 1875. I was then twenty, but no performance had I seen before or have I seen since that so impressed me as that. From the moment he walked on to those classic boards—to use the hackneyed phrase—to the fall of the curtain, the house was enthralled. His voice, his manner, his method, and above all, his eyes, combined to make that performance ever memorable. He was frightfully handicapped, for his "support" was atrocious and his scenery unworthy of a village booth. In those days I patronised the top gallery, satisfied with a bird's-eye view of the stage, and I shall never forget the vile carpet of large square pattern—the most aggressive covering I ever saw on any boards, used in the bedroom scene, where the Moor suffocates Desdemona; yet, blinding as it was, Salvini's personality and wonderful facial expression

rose above it. Then that wonderful scene with Iago, where the wretch is crawling on the ground: Salvini raised his foot as if to crush his head, then suddenly



SALVINI

stopped and, remembering his dignity, he courteously offers his hand to the traitor to rise.

Strange to say, Salvini was not introduced into this country by any theatrical manager. He was brought here by Mapleson of opera fame, which gave the humorists that evening some ground for chaff and calls

for a song when the stage was not occupied by the great tragedian himself. Salvini took London by storm, but so fickle is the public taste that when the grand actor next visited England he played to eight pounds!

Among those pieces which I had to sketch for the press was *Tom Cobb*, one of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's wittiest productions. It was of the Dickens, mid-Victorian order of plays, plenty of strongly-drawn character—impecunious Bob Sawyers and others in Bohemian London life. E. W. Royce, I remember, and Miss Lytton.

It is strange nowadays that such plays as *Tom Cobb*, *Our Boys*, and of more recent date *Trelawny of the Wells*, plays dealing with the artistic, professional, and theatrical life of our fathers, are not appreciated as they should be by the rising generation. In Pinero's clever production *Trelawny of the Wells*, Mr. Dion Boucicault, as the old Whig Vice-Chancellor, puts round his neck the chain worn by Kean in one of his finest impersonations, in truth a touching scene. The youths in the stalls tittered. They little saw the pathos. It was specially pathetic, as this chain was the actual one that really was worn by the great Kean.

A play of the same class was another I had to illustrate when I was a young artist—*Wig and Gown*, by James Albery. It was produced by Johnny Toole at the Globe Theatre and was not a success. I remember on the first night Toole felt this. The house, strange to say, was not crammed. The critics were there—in those days they were not so numerous as now—and they were satisfied with one seat instead of, as now, two or three; but the public were absent, and, as I say, the piece was falling flat. Toole represented a briefless barrister of the mid-Victorian era—Micawberlike surroundings, including a

numerous family; one of these, to add to the realism, had brought into the theatre a bag of nuts, which the children crunched and dropped about the stage. These poor Toole, as the barrister, crushed under his feet as he ran about the stage. He ended by stopping the play to lecture the children for turning his scene into a monkey house in the Zoo. Poor Toole never really held London. Towards the end of his career, *The House Boat* was certainly a success, but for many years he played to ridiculously poor houses in London and made his money in the provinces.

SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS AS A CUPID.

One of the funniest first nights the editor of *Punch* and I attended was the debut of the "greatest tragedian America has ever produced," Misther M'Cullough, begorrah! who appeared as Virginius at Drury Lane. M'Cullough was a huge, strong-lunged, mouthing actor, who filled the Drury Lane stage with his massive figure, and the house with his tremendous voice. But the fun came when no less a person than Sir Augustus Harris danced on to the stage, in a curly wig, flowing blue toga, pink tights, and gilt-edged boots—as Burnand said, "rather suggestive of an overgrown Cupid who has given up his wings as childish, and who has taken lessons from a Parisian ballet-master."

Harris was all the time fancying himself in the part, a youthful, Roman young man of the *Harris*tocracy—the pun is Burnand's. Poor Harris—a genius as a theatrical manager, who rose to do great things—was the worst possible actor.

The æsthetic craze was just then fair game, and I perpetrated a skit for *Punch* showing "The Cheap Æsthetic Swell," 'ow 'Arry goes in for the "intense 'eat."

> Twopence I gave for my sunshade,
> A penny I gave for my fan,
> Threepence I paid for my straw—foreign made—
> I'm a Japan-Æsthetic young man!

This parody of Gilbert reminds me that it is in the same volume (1881) that Gilbert and Sullivan's successful operas (which have since been the delight of theatre-goers the world over) are first mentioned in the pages of *Punch*. It is no secret that Sir Francis Burnand never forgave Sullivan for having Gilbert in place of Burnand for his librettist. Burnand and Sullivan had done *Cox and Box* (a parody of *Box and Cox*). Then Gilbert stepped in with *The Trial by Jury*, and exit Burnand. Gilbert, however, was not a parodist, but an originator. *Patience* is not a copy of anything. *The Colonel*—in which Burnand "took off" the æsthetic craze and was so successful at the old Prince of Wales' that it was not taken off until he (F.C.B.) and Edgar Bruce made a huge pile out of it—was a parody of the play *The Serious Family*. The original cast included that inimitable actor Charles Coghlan, representing a Colonel from America, who was very much Coghlan and very little of an American. Miss Myra Holme—afterwards Lady Pinero—was the charming heroine: and Amy Roselle

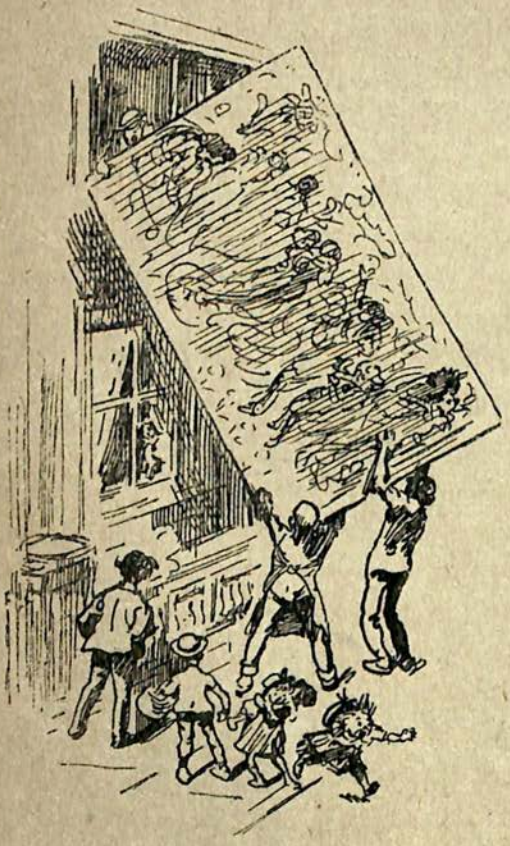
(one of the original "Two Roses"), then Mrs. Dacre, played the Society lady, and with her husband committed suicide in Australia a few years later. Edgar Bruce subsequently played the Colonel in London, and Charles Collette played the same character in the provinces as well as London. Young Buckstone was capital as the æsthetic artist. It ran so long the company produced an evening paper to pass the "waits" in the green room, the only instance, I should imagine, of journalistic enterprise behind the scenes.

I was a great deal at the theatre, for, after the play had run a considerable time and Edgar Bruce came into it, he and Burnand decided to add fresh interest by advertising, and I was selected to do a huge poster—one of the largest ever painted. I carried it out in the manner of a Burne-Jones decorative pageant, and the players came to my studio and sat to me in their stage costumes. So large was the work I had the canvas stretched on a frame in my studio and was obliged to have the window removed to get it out when completed. I never got anything for it—like another poster of mine, "I used your soap two years ago," the editor of *Punch* got the one, and the proprietors of *Punch* were paid through advertisements for the other.

The most elaborate practical joke, extending over years, figures in one of my earliest recollections of London, the author and principal player of which was that prince of practical fun, the late E. A. Sothern, the original Dundreary, and the first and most polished player of *David Garrick*. Strange to say, Sir Charles Wyndham's David Garrick, familiar to playgoers of later date, was second performer in playing that joke.

I was just old enough to enjoy the David Garrick of

Sothern, which, comparing it to Wyndham's, resembles a Gainsborough portrait compared to one painted by Herkomer. The secret of Art is to conceal Art. Herkomer, a great painter, was a mannerist, and in his pictures the personality of the painter is not concealed. In Wyndham's Garrick the actor was still the actor, but Sothern was the gentleman playing the actor. In all other Garricks I have seen the actor is playing the gentleman.



MY POSTER FOR "THE COLONEL."

In playing the practical joke Wyndham was also a very good second to Sothern, and in no joke better than in this one, played, by the way, upon another volatile comedian, a very long way in talent behind either of those two great comedians whom I have mentioned. I refer to the late Edgar Bruce, who played "The Colonel," and who died a few years ago in perfect ignorance, I believe, that the following practical joke had made his life a success. I have no sympathy with jokes, "practical" or

otherwise, which end in giving pain, but in some scenes of this joke I was a mere spectator at a distance. It began at a Saturday evening house dinner in the Junior Garrick, a theatrical club long since defunct. Edgar Bruce, who was a good-looking but excitable and ambitious actor, with a very light and airy style, and of a nervous and inquisitive nature, was present. A stranger was seated near to Sothern. "Who is he?" asked Bruce of every one, and of Sothern in particular.

"Sh-h-h! Wait and see," mysteriously whispered Sothern. "I'll introduce him after dinner. You wait: most important."

The dinner proceeded, Sothern apparently paying the greatest deference to his guest—his guest was probably Mr. Brown, of Oldham, or any very ordinary individual. Sothern was inspired, however, to make him an ambassador from the Czar of Russia, or some such potentate. The club was at the corner of Adam Street and Adelphi Terrace, and at that time Attenborough's most famous pawnbroking shop was close by, at the Strand corner of Adam Street. To send a message from Sothern and borrow some foreign orders, Russian, if possible, was easily accomplished during the dinner.

After dinner the "Ambassador" was formally introduced by Sothern, who explained to all present (all of whom were in the joke except Bruce) that the Czar had determined, regardless of cost, to have a series of English comedies performed at St. Petersburg, by the best actors and actresses of England. Already hearing of the fame of many he had, through his special Ambassador, sent greetings to those at present selected. Those selected were formally mentioned and presented, Bruce excepted;

and the curtain fell on the first act of the comedy, Bruce in the centre, the picture of despair.

The second act was a letter to Bruce from the Czar (really sent from Russia), explaining that the Czar had selected him to be the manager of the whole company, and enclosing him a Russian order of merit. One stipulation was made, however: that Bruce must know the Russian language. The more famous Bruce of spider fame was eclipsed in perseverance by Edgar of that (adopted) name and in tackling the fearsome Russian tongue.

The next act consisted of a series of pretty scenes: Edgar in a boat on a Thames backwater, alone, struggling with Russian, and Bruce in the land of despair, still wrestling with the Slavonic lingo—triumphant at last, alas! merely to be crushed again.

The next scene was an interior—in which I played a super's part. The studio of that talented and handsome artist Valentine Bromley (the Forbes Robertson's brother-in-law), in Hart Street, Bloomsbury, in which was being held a "Smoking Evening," popular in those days; artists, authors, and other Bohemians; music, smoking, and drinking, supplemented later by the actors arriving in force. Bruce is there, as usual talking of Russia, the Russian language, and the coming great event —the tour of the picked comedians of England, personally conducted by himself. Sothern is present, so is Wyndham. Soon after midnight the fun begins, the studio is crowded and the smoke is thick, the chatter deafening, when above all rises the penetrating voice of Charles Wyndham. What does he say? Why does Bruce start forward? Why is he so agitated and pale?

EDGAR BRUCE STUDYING RUSSIAN.

The Russian tour is at the bottom of it, jealousy, hatred, and malice.

There is a scuffle—high words which nearly lead to blows. Friends separate Wyndham and Sothern, and they leave swearing eternal hatred, and others join in the *mêlée*. The leading actors of England are hopelessly riotous.

The tour to the Czar is in jeopardy.

The next scene is in Wyndham's bedroom later, the same morning. Bruce arrives at the break of morn with Sothern, whom he has waked out of his sleep and made to dress, and brought in a cab to shake hands and "make friends" with Wyndham. So far so good. All except poor Bruce are getting some fun out of the joke, but the authors are troubled how to end it. It has gone so far that Bruce must not discover the truth, or the last act would be bound to take place in Colney Hatch, and it therefore must end in a practical way.

A letter arrives from Russia regretting that the Czar has been—through political reasons—compelled to abandon the projected tour. Poor Bruce! Well, he was given the management of the Haymarket Theatre as a recompense; he made money, retired, lived and died happily, I believe in ignorance that he owed his good fortune to a practical joke!

My first efforts in *Punch* were confined to the three P's—Parliament, Pictures, and the Playhouse. I was then the regular theatrical artist for *Punch*, and in that capacity saw many interesting first nights.

The first night I represented Mr. Punch as a "Special Artist" at the theatre was shortly after I began to draw for that paper. The piece was *Anne Mie*; the theatre, the Prince of Wales (the old "Dust Hole," subsequently

"the golden dust hole of the Bancrofts"). But there was very little gold dust, I fear, extracted from that play. It was made ridiculous by a very clever lady and really fine actress, Miss Genevieve Ward—famous in many parts, but particularly in *Forget-Me-Not*—a lady who, in every sense, "fills the stage" with her fine presence, splendid elocution, and intense acting.

The old Prince of Wales little play-box of a theatre—the Bancrofts' money-box—was not a large stage to "fill," and when Miss Genevieve Ward entered as Anne Mie, wearing a little Dutch cap and short padded Dutch skirts, with bare arms and an arch, skittish look, supposed to represent a beautiful young ravishing maiden of seventeen summers, my editor, seated next to me, saw that the burlesque-writers' occupation, like Othello's, had gone. It was drama and burlesque rolled into one. I made a cruel, a very cruel sketch at the critical moment of the play, when with fine histrionic force Miss Ward threw herself down on her face on the stage. The house had become unmannerly just before by laughing at Anne Mie sitting on the knee of Edgar Bruce, who vainly tried to dance the coy little Anne in the playful way befitting a dollish Dutch child. But the audience really became solemn—for the acting was excellent—when Anne Mie went down. Well, my sketch was something like this,

"ANNE MIE FALLS A LITTLE FLAT."

and under it I wrote, "About this time Anne Mie falls a little flat. Annie Mie has a slight difficulty in rising again in public estimation."

The editor and I visited the Alhambra to see a new ballet—as if such a thing can be described as "new." Plum puddings, of course, are new every year, but they are made of the same ingredients; one ballet is as much like another as one plum pudding resembles another plum pudding.

Curiously enough, the first ballet the editor and myself saw "in the interest of Mr. Punch" was a steaming hot affair, its success depending on a curious novelty—a volume of steam, leapt over by the principal dancer with the aid of a rope, rising right across the stage. Burnand suggested that this vapour ascended from a steam-laundry somewhere below.

While the ballet was in full swing, the designer came into our box, a rather foppish old beau, who interested me immensely, for I had heard a great deal of him and seen much of his work. This was Alfred Thompson, at one time quite a celebrity in London as a caricaturist, satirical writer, playwright, ballet producer, and Bohemian of the foppish, waxed-moustache, ex-military, hat-on-one-side style of old-young man about town. Burnand, who knew him well, chaffed him about the steam effect. "My young friend Furniss and I have decided to support the show by getting our wives to send our weekly washing and mangling to be done *à la* Alhambra. You ought, my dear Alfred, to publish a list of laundry prices on the back of the programme, and, by the way—happy thought!—engage Johnny Toole to appear up a trap in the scene with his old gag—'I am so 'appy!'"

Burnand was also facetious when the composer of the music, Jacobs, came in to see us, and asked him if his beautiful dress shirt was not dressed in the "Alhambra Laundry." Jacobi was a great personality for many years at the Alhambra. When conducting he did not turn his back on the audience, but on the orchestra he was conducting, and faced the stalls.

JACOBI.

A first night of great importance was the production of the then Poet Laureate's play, *The Cup*, at the Lyceum. It just came at the right moment, for the æsthetic craze was then at its height, and this play was æstheticism or nothing. One test of a play is the number of its revivals. *The Cup* was never revived again, either as a compliment to Tennyson or to Irving.

It was a very picturesque series of tableaux in the style of the greenery-yallery Burne-Jonesy production, Miss Terry as Camma might have walked out of a mangle —or a Burne-Jones picture. She lay on a couch a good deal of the time, playing a harp shaped like a goose. Irving as Synorix, in a tiger skin and bangles, a wreath on his head and a weakness in his knees, might, but for the latter failing, have represented a tamer of wild beasts. There were no beasts, however, but a number of wild

dogs led in by Terriss as Sinnatus. They all went to the dogs in a short time, and as Burnand wrote:

> "So there is an end of one, two, and three—
> Terriss and Irving and Ellen Terr*ee*."

An interesting experiment was tried at the Lyceum when *Othello* was produced on May 2nd, 1881. Booth, the American tragedian, had not been a great success in England, his stagey, old-fashioned style failing to impress the British public as it had the American. An idea struck Irving—or rather Irving's manager—that it would be a draw in London to work up this Anglo-American combination of "stars."

It was arranged that Irving and Booth should alternate the leading parts, a happy idea that doubled their audience, for if one saw Booth as Othello, one would go a second time to see him as Iago.

Irving never did anything finer than Iago, for his peculiar mannerism suited the part exactly, nor perhaps anything so badly as Othello. Booth was not good as Iago, particularly after Irving; but his Othello, though not to be mentioned in the same day as Salvini's, was respectable compared with Irving's.

Irving's Iago impressed the audience from the first moment he entered on the first night, and his success was assured. His "business" was elaborate and novel. As he stood by a sundial with a huge bunch of hothouse grapes in his hand, eating them one by one, lustily, with a foxlike expression, it struck one the real Iago was there!

One of my earliest theatrical recollections in London was being invited to the Twelfth Night gathering known as "Cutting the Baddeley Cake," in old Drury Lane Theatre.

IRVING AS IAGO.

An obscure actor, Baddeley, an ex-cook, chef to the famous Lord North; also employed by Samuel Foote, in whose house no doubt he was inspired to emulate the great actors of the day. Eventually he did gratify his ambition, but so as to rid himself of the flavour of the kitchen, he travelled as valet to a gentleman, and it is on record that Baddeley first appeared as an actor at Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin. Foote, it is said, was present when he made his first appearance, and noticing the new actor wore a sword exclaimed, "Ha, Baddeley, I am heartily glad to see you in the way of complete transmigration—you have turned your spit into a sword already." He returned to London to become a member of the better-known playhouse, Drury Lane, there to gain certain applause for his acting of Frenchmen and Jew characters. And he left behind him a curious will which has made his name more familiar to the play-going public to this day than any actor with the exception of Kemble, Kean, Macready,

IRVING AS OTHELLO.

and Phelps, who have made Old Drury famous. Baddeley did not forget his first profession nor his last in this provision in his will:

"One hundred pounds Three per Cent. Consolidated Bank Annuities, which produce £3 per Annum, to purchase a Twelfth-Cake, with wine and punch, which the ladies and gentlemen of Drury Lane Theatre are requested to partake of every Twelfth Night in the Green-room."

As I say, I recollect being present, in my early days in London, at the carrying-out of this unique request. The small gathering was in the green room. The Clown, Pantaloon, Harlequin, Columbine, and Sprite were in their "make-ups," as they ran off the stage at the fall of the curtain. Some of the others were also in costume, but the majority had changed into their ordinary clothes. Manager Chatterton made a few remarks about the ex-cook's goodness of heart.

It was an unassuming, Bohemian, motley gathering on the Twelfth Night. The Columbine cut the cake, and the Clown made a serious speech. Punch, wine, cake and all soon disappeared, the little Fairies finishing their slice as they hurried away to their homes through the snow.

The next Baddeley Cake celebration I was invited to, a few years afterwards, was held on the stage. More guests were present. The "sherry wine" was superseded by champagne, but the punch-bowl was flowing over and the cake was conspicuous. The Clown and his associates, and the little Fairies and Sprites were there. The pantomime Prince, now in petticoats, made a speech

standing on a chair. I recollect being rather startled in the middle of the speechifying by seeing a huge knife thrust through the scenery close to me, and in a circular direction cut away a large hole, through which a hand appeared, and before any one could prevent it a number of bottles of champagne had disappeared.

I read afterwards that a party of visitors spied some champagne in a corner, and appropriated the lot for their table, but discovered to their chagrin when they tried to open them that they were "property bottles" made and painted for one of the scenes in the pantomime.

The mention of a prince recalls to my mind a curious incident I came across in an old book. On Twelfth Night, 1802, a real prince, the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth, took part at the annual cake-cutting introduced by Sheridan. It is said that the Prince "delighted everybody with his affability, his gentlemanly manners, and his witty remarks." Sheridan, looking at the cake and noticing a large crown with which it was surmounted, playfully said, "It is not right that a crown should be the property of a *cake*: what say you, George?" The Prince merely laughed; and Sheridan, taking up the crown, offered it to him, adding, "Will you deign to accept this trifle?" "Not so," replied His Highness: "however it may be doubted, it is nevertheless true that I prefer the cake to the crown, after all." "And so, declining the crown, he partook of our feast with hilarity and condescension."

The last Baddeley Cake celebration I attended was about as unlike the previous ones, and about as unlike anything Baddeley intended, as one could possibly conceive. It was a tremendous banquet. The largest set scene of the pantomime was used; tier over tier of tables

rising high up into the wings, crowded with everybody who was anybody in society, law, art, trade, of high or low degree. Ladies in gorgeous costumes, gentlemen in immaculate evening dress; a splendid band discoursing sweet music, but, alas! one could not find the Columbine or the Sprite, the Fairies, or the other "ladies and gentlemen of Drury Lane Theatre," who were in Baddeley's will "requested" to partake of £3 worth of Twelfth Cake with wine and punch in the green room of the theatre.

Shade of Baddeley! Sir Augustus Harris unconsciously recalls your impersonations on that historic stage, as he bids this tremendous living advertisement for himself, using your name merely as an excuse, to partake of a supper that even you, Baddeley, would have failed to understand, when you wielded your chef's ladle, or later the theatrical sword. In place of your cake, Mayonnaise de Homard, Petits Pâtés des Huîtres, Côtelettes de Homard à la Cardinal, Aspics de Crevettes, Croquettes de Volaille et Langue, Petites Bouches à la Monglas, Mauviettes en Casses aux fines Herbes, Aspics de fois Gras, Petits Pâtés de Ris de Veau, Rissoles de Gibier à la Lyon, Aspics de Poulet aux Truffe, Anchois Sandwiches, Jambon Sandwiches, Faisan Sandwiches, Charlotte à la Parisienne, Gelée Macedoine des Fruits, Crème de Framboises, Gelée Pouche à la Remain, Bavaroise de Vanille, Pâtisserie Française, Chartreuse d'Apricot, Gâteau de Savoy décoré, and Meringues à la Chantilly. Champagne galore, Han et Cie., Cuvée Réservé 1883.

A ball followed, a motley throng of peers and legislators, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, authors, artists, critics, journalists, bewitching actresses, and ladies of Society com-

bined to make one of the most brilliant spectacles ever seen. It was kept up till the early morn, hours after those "ladies and gentlemen of Drury Lane Theatre" had gone to sleep in their humble homes, some perhaps supperless, after a thought for Baddeley as he had thought for them. Strange, should his ghost have walked that night, to find his name on every invitation card, and yet only in the mind of one or two in that pandemonium of music, feasting, and dance.

CHAPTER XIV

SIR HENRY IRVING

Irving as a model—Art and the drama—Don Quixote—His horse and what came of it—Dressing-bag Thompson—Appreciation—Imitations of Irving—A practical joker—Mr. Gladstone at the Lyceum—Buckstone

SOMETHING of an apology is, perhaps, expected from me for adding my little stock of reminiscences of our greatest actor to the huge list of those already published. I think I may say, however, that I had exceptional opportunities of knowing him. I may also claim that I give correct version of the stories connected with Irving, which occasionally crop up in a more or less garbled form. He and I were very old friends, and I made a careful study of him in fifty of his best-known characters. Every one of these sketches he approved of. Let me begin my recollections with a quotation from a letter

which I sent to *The Daily Telegraph*, apropos of the republication in that journal, two days after Irving's death, of my sketches of him in the character of Robespierre:

"SIR,—The republication of my sketches of Irving as Robespierre recalls to mind the pleasant circumstances under which I carried out this commission for you. As you state, it was Sir Henry's special desire that I should make the drawings. He was tired rehearsing, and so as not to add to his fatigue he made an appointment with me to sketch him when in his rooms in Bond Street, resting. 'You know me well enough, my dear Furniss, to sketch me as Robespierre or in any other character if you see the costume.'

"I was rather surprised that, so far as I have seen, no artist's name appears in all the appreciations of Irving published since his death. Yet Irving, to my mind, was essentially the artist-actor. A deaf man, if artistic, could enjoy and understand the subtlety of Sir Henry Irving's wonderful performances, simply through watching his artistic manner.

"In 1887, when I removed my 'Artistic Joke' from the Gainsborough Gallery, in Bond Street, and re-opened it in Manchester shortly afterwards, I found that Irving happened to be playing in that city in *Faust*. The Manchester Art and Literary Club gave a supper in his honour, and, hearing that I was in the city, they very kindly invited me. To my surprise and embarrassment, I found myself placed at the table at the left of the chairman, and regarded as the second guest of the evening.

"After supper Irving delivered, in his easy manner, one of those graceful speeches in which no one sur-

passed him. I was then called upon to follow upon 'Art,' and, unprepared, I was somewhat at a loss to connect 'Art' and 'The Drama.' However, I advanced a favourite point of mine, which is that artists derive much benefit from the theatre, whither they go to learn. I reminded my listeners that a hundred years ago Royal Academicians used to meet at their Royal Academy, where a model was placed in front of them, in order that they might discuss the different attitudes and movements of figures and their drapery. This their successors no longer meet to do, and I pointed out that among the reasons which have led them to discontinue the practice was the fact that they can now sit in the stalls of the Lyceum Theatre and get a lesson in motion, attitude, and the movement of drapery, from such a master of those arts as Irving."

In fact, no actor ever came nearer to the combination of the artist and the actor than Sir Henry Irving.

It struck me as I was making the remarks noted above, that Irving was probably thinking of the caricatures I had perpetrated of him. But although there is no denying the fact that he was very sensitive to caricature, he knew that I was a genuine admirer of his genius, and that, in common with all artists, I knew him to be a true artist also, and his poses and the management of his hands and drapery were well worth studying by the brethren of the pencil and the brush.

He was as much a friend to the workers in the studio as he was to those on the stage, and it is therefore sad to think that he fared so badly at the hands of the artists —both painters and sculptors. The late Edwin Long painted a very poor picture of Irving as Hamlet. Millais'

portrait exhibited in the Academy, and since then hanging over the fireplace in the strangers' room in the Garrick Club, gives one no idea of strength, and Irving had a strong face. And as he frequently sat under this portrait, it was easy to contrast the original with the picture.

A caricaturist is one who emphasises all the bad qualities in the sitter and avoids all the better ones. Is it libellous to say that a certain R.A.'s portraits are clever, simply for the reason that he is most uncompromising? He paints the Jew picture-dealer, cunning, leery; the turn of the thumb, the whole attitude is that of a Jew in burlesque. Yet who can say it is not true to life?

The wife of the vulgar business profiteering man, as he depicts her, with diamonds in her hair, on every finger, round each wrist, is true to nature. Yet the nature seems more vulgar on canvas than in real life. The artist who can paint the truth and "show up" his sitters, as caricatures do, is daring; but he is, in his art, essentially a caricaturist. Still, when he paints a portrait of a great artist, and not merely of a successful man or woman in trade, he ought to bring out the best points of his sitter. His portrait of Irving, a greater artist himself than all the Academicians—English, Dutch, or Yankee—ought to have been the tribute of one artist to another—such a portrait, for instance, as that of Mrs. Siddons by Reynolds. But what was that portrait? The head of a drunken, fifth-rate, broken-down mummer. I caricatured it mercifully in *Punch* as our own Irving with a bad cold in his head. Anyway, it was certainly quite unworthy of the artist painter or of the artist actor. This Irving himself felt, and felt bitterly. He made no secret of the fate of this portrait. For one evening, at

a dinner of distinguished people, he informed the guests what had befallen it.

Irving had a clever trick, which I frequently saw him practise, of getting the "ear of the table." Say he was at one end, I the farthest away. He would wait his opportunity, and then raising his voice say, "Furniss, I was just telling my friend on my right that——"; "Furniss, I was just saying that——" and so on. All conversation stopped; and those between Irving and myself were obliged to listen; which meant that the whole table was attentive.

On the occasion in question he said: "I was reminded, by seeing Furniss down there, of a curious thing" (of course he was not, and the "curious thing" had nothing to do with me; but he had the ear of the table).

But to return to the fate of the portrait.

"I have been asking my friend next to me," he said, indicating the President of the Royal Academy, and addressing the company in general, "whether any man has a right to destroy the work of a great artist, should that artist produce a portrait which may be regarded as a libel. Some of you have seen a portrait of me by X——, who I believe is a great painter, exhibited in the Academy a few seasons ago. That portrait I looked upon with indignation. To-day—this very morning—in the process of packing (I am leaving my old rooms off Bond Street), I came across it. I called in my old servant-man and asked him what he thought of it. Would he have it? No; he declined. So I took a long sharp knife and I cut that portrait into long strips, and my man threw them into the fire. Now, was I justified in that act? That is what I want to know."

It is a thousand pities that this clever artist did not

rise to the occasion and hand down to posterity a really fine portrait of Irving. This unfortunate one was only a head. He could have painted the head again, and some model could have sat for the figure. Irving knew all about such studio matters, as the following anecdote shows.

It so happened I sat at supper next to Irving on the night of the greatest prize-fight of our time. Strange to say, it was a supper at the Garrick Club given by an artist to those who supported his election to the club. The fight I had been to was that famous encounter at the National Sporting Club between Slavin and the black pugilist, Jackson. Irving was deeply interested in my account of the fight I had just seen. I told him of the fine effort of the defeated but plucky white man, Slavin. As an artist I could not but admire the grand physique of the ebony-skinned gladiator.

"Yes," said Irving, "he must be a splendid fellow. You know, we actors have taken credit for a physique not our own—witness the pictures of the last generation and those before. Then the actor sat only for the head; a prize-fighter posed for the figure, and, strange to say, the favourite model of the last generation was a coloured fighter."

With the exception of Hamlet, no part has ever been the making of an actor. An actor must make the part. But with Hamlet it is different. No one who can act at all entirely fails as Hamlet. We have had bad Hamlets and good Hamlets: but no actor can be bad enough to utterly destroy the play. For the part of the Prince of Denmark is infallible. When well played it has been the making of the actor, and none has it ever ruined.

IRVING AS HAMLET.

On the other hand we can never say of any actor: "Ah, what a Hamlet he would make! The part was written for him," as one can say of Romeo and Falstaff, and of dozens of other characters. There is always a Romeo to be selected from the young actors, and a Falstaff among our older friends. Mark Lemon was an instance of the latter. He was Falstaff in real life; he had, therefore, only to walk on to the stage and speak his lines. Nevertheless, he was by no means a success; perhaps not any more successful as Falstaff than Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree was as Hamlet. Yet if a man brought up in a public-house, and eventually becoming an associate of wits, should suggest Falstaff, surely, on the other hand, an unlimitedly resourceful and surpassingly weird tragedian—a consummate comedian and a foreigner to boot—should be an ideal Hamlet. But he was not. He looked the part to perfection; he moved in the part faultlessly; but the performance can never be recorded among his successes. The same actor, however, made an ideal Falstaff!

No one would ever select Sir Henry Irving to play Falstaff, but every one selected him to play Don Quixote. The part was written for him, and he looked the character to perfection. But one great difficulty that presented itself was the finding of Don Quixote's horse—sufficiently quaint, starved, and aged. Irving had not himself thought much about it, but as the time for the production drew near he realised with anxiety that he had to appear attired in armour, astride his charger. He consulted his trustworthy lieutenant, Mr. Bram Stoker.

"Bram, what about the horse, eh?"

"Oh, that's all right. I have found the very one for

you in a field between Sunderland and South Shields. It's on its way."

The rehearsals went on. Irving bestrode a common or prompter's chair, and waved his umbrella in place of his spear.

IRVING AS DON QUIXOTE.

But horse-riding — particularly in front of the footlights—is a feat not to be performed without practice.

"Bram, *where* is that horse?"

"I've just got a telegram, sir; it is on its way; it will be at Euston before we reach Act II."

No horse arrived. Irving was getting more and more uneasy.

"Bram, where is that horse? I had better hire one somewhere in London."

"It's *coming*. Hire one in London! Why, there is not one in the whole of London to suit the part. Wait till you see this one. It will be a gigantic success. You can count its ribs, and its bones stand out like hat-pegs. It's ewe-necked and has a head like a camel."

"But where is it? I must see it to-day."

Bram rushed from the stage, and nearly upset a messenger rushing on with a telegram.

The telegram ran: "Horse and man have arrived at Euston and started for theatre."

Mr. Bram Stoker handed the telegram to his chief. Mr. Loveday called out Act II; Sir Henry disappeared to his dressing-room to have his armour put on, and before all this was completed Mr. Bram Stoker returned. He rushed on to the stage with reddened face and glistening eye, his whole appearance denoting tragic disappointment.

"Stoker, *where is that horse*?"

"Oh, it's all up with it."

"What, not here! Where is it?"

"It arrived—it left Euston——"

"Yes, yes; I know. I saw the telegram. But where is it?"

"Well, the man and the beast got as far as Bow Street, then the police stopped them. The horse was ordered to be shot, and the man has been sentenced to a month's hard labour for cruelty to animals!"

The painstaking Mr. Stoker's trouble was therefore lost, and stage realism suffered a blow. The substitute was a cab-horse, which, strange to relate, had to be made up for every performance to look a "bag of bones": ribs painted and hollow flanks artistically suggested.

Irving had as Sancho Panza Sam Johnson, a right good actor. I shall never forget that comedian's trouble in managing his mule at rehearsal.

I recollect that excellent actor well. As I have said in an earlier chapter I first saw him in pantomime, when I was a little boy in knickerbockers; perhaps my first—

and therefore happiest—pantomime. In that production, *Aladdin*, Sam Johnson had to manage a mule or a donkey. But the donkey in that case was from the ordinary pantomime paddock, and consisted of two acrobats with a donkey skin over them. Mr. Johnson did not, I remember even now, seem a bit more at home on the pantomime mule than he did, later in his career, on the real one. In the meantime he had played many parts, from the First Gravedigger in *Hamlet* to the part of Stryver in the adaptation of Charles Dickens's "Tale of Two Cities," entitled *The Only Way*.

The little incident related above recalls another that happened a few years afterwards, when Irving produced Sardou's *Robespierre*. It was then necessary to have a horse to pull on a cart crowded with country folk, in the beautiful rustic scene with which the play opens.

This time Irving did not trust to wasters from the north, or risks with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He discovered that the white horse ridden by another celebrated actor in a popular play which had just completed its run was, in technical phraseology, "resting"; so it was brought on to the stage of the Lyceum at rehearsal for Irving's inspection. The following conversation took place between Sir Henry and the man with the horse:

"My good man, is this horse docile?"

"Lor' bless you, Sir 'Enry, it's as quiet as a lamb."

"And accustomed, I hear, to the stage, eh?"

"Yes, sir; it's the very 'orse as 'as been such a success in Mr. Tree's great production at his grand theatre."

"Ah, quite so, quite so. Mr. Tree found it a good actor, eh?"

"I should think he did. Why, when Mr. Tree was

haranguing the audience, why this 'ere 'orse yawned, it did."

"Ah, I see, it's a good critic too."

Sir Henry never forgot an old friend; and many and many a kindly act of princely generosity is known.

Shortly after Irving went into management at the Lyceum, he was walking down the Strand, when he was accosted by an out-at-elbow, broken-down tragedian:

"What? Harry, my hearty! How is my old pal Harry? Why, the boys tells me, Irving, that you are now an actor-manager—running the Lyceum. Who ever would have thought of this, in the old stock days at Edinburgh and Liverpool, eh?"

"Ah, my dear fellow, quite so—quite so," said Irving, shaking the stranger by the hand. "But you have the advantage of me. Who are you?"

"Who am I? Why, Roscius Shakespeare Thompson; you remember R. S. Thompson—Rocy, your old pal."

"Ah, of course; now I do recall you, Thompson. You are Dressing-bag Thompson, aren't you?"

"Why, of course I am; 'Dressing-bag Thompson.' Fancy, Harry, your remembering that after all these years!"

Years before Thompson had received—from a rich old lady admirer—an inveterate theatre goer—a magnificently equipped dressing-bag, which the impecunious Bohemian never failed to carry about with him when he was on tour.

"What are you doing, Thompson?"

"Walking gent; examiner of public buildings; anything you like but acting. Ah, Harry, the profession isn't what it was in the palmy days of stock companies. They're all burst now, and shop-boys become "actors,"

and tour in pieces written by clerks, and run by American Jew company-promoters. The 'legitimate,'" said Thompson, thumping himself on the chest, "are no longer appreciated. By the way, Harry, what can you do for one of the right sort?"

"Come round to the Lyceum; we'll consult Bram Stoker. . . . Here, Stoker, allow me to introduce Mr. Thompson—'Dressing-Bag Thompson.' Is our company full? We'll put him on the list and chance a suitable part turning up." Then, turning to Thompson, he said:

"What about salary, eh? Twelve pounds a week, eh?"

"From you, Harry, as an old pal, I will accept that retainer. I like to help an old friend; so consider my services are yours at the honorarium mentioned."

"That's all right, Thompson; you will be paid weekly and advised when the next play is to be read. Good-bye, Thompson. How is your mother? All right, eh? Of course! Bram, just pay Mr. Thompson his first week's salary in advance."

The next play was read in due course. "Dressing-bag Thompson" sat with the rest of the company while the characters were distributed, but no part fell to him.

"Henry, Henry, where is my part?" he cried.

"Eh? Ah, yes, my dear fellow," said Irving, walking up to him. "The play, you see, is by a modern author, one of those fellows who don't appreciate legitimate actors. Better luck next time! You get your twelve pounds a week, I hope? How is your mother? Good-bye, old chap."

Again the time came round for another reading—this time a revival of Shakespeare. Thompson rose and asked once more where his part was. Irving approached him

kindly, but "Dressing-bag Thompson" greeted him with: "No, no, Harry; no excuse this time, old chap. The immortal bard is no new author, he's legitimate. Where is my part?"

"Ah, my dear fellow," said Irving, putting his arm into Thompson's and drawing him to one side. "You get your salary, eh—twelve pounds a week?"

"Yes, yes; but where's my part? This is not a modern author."

"No, no; of course. But, 'Dressing-bag Thompson,' you know we're obliged to respect the dead."

I was once sketching Irving in a new piece at a dress rehearsal for one of the illustrated papers. At the same time an artist hailing from the Emerald Isle, with the strongest brogue I ever heard, appealed to me as a friend of Irving to allow him to see that actor in his dressing-room for the purpose of getting more detail of the costume. This Irving kindly assented to; and after some time the Irish artist returned full of admiration.

"Begorrah, sorr, Irving's a wonderful man intoirly. Oi hadn't bin spakin' foive minuets whin he axes me, 'Whin, thin, did you lave Oireland?' Begorrah, he's a wonderful insoight into cha-*rac*-ter to till Oi was Oirish afther only foive minuets' talk!"

Irving appreciated any little attention or compliment. I came across a letter from him acknowledging one of my books, which is reproduced on the opposite page.

I have drawn more caricatures of Irving and have given more imitations, but, being as unlike the actor as any man could be, I had to depend on voice alone. So much so that, once at a garden-party at a house in the country, a young lady—afterwards famous as a singer—gave an imitation of Miss Ellen Terry as Juliet in the

LYCEUM THEATRE.

Dear Francis

Your book & your giving it to me has given me the greatest pleasure.

It is a wonderful piece of work — which I did not know existed.

I shall ever value your gift, which I look upon as a most kind & friendly one.

Ever sincerely yours

Henry:

8 April 1891

balcony scene; I was Irving as Romeo, but wisely hid myself in a laurel bush so as not to destroy the illusion.

One of Irving's company at the Lyceum, of the name of Lewis, in years gone by, gave a marvellous and original imitation of Irving playing a game of billiards. The idea was as simple as it was ingenious, and had one merit over other "sketches" of Irving—it might have happened. Of course it never did, but it was possible. Irving is asked by a stranger to play a game—a hundred up.

"Eh? Yes, yes. I don't mind. Play even, eh? No points—ah!"

The "business" was then simple and delightfully comic, Irving taking off his coat as if he were removing a coat-of-mail, which he hangs up on a peg with the manner of hanging it up on a castle wall. Then follows the selection of the cue, as if choosing a double-handed sword for a combat with Macduff. "Ah! too heavy. Eh! too-o-o light. Eh! ah! too-o-o long"; and so on. The cue selected, then the business with the "chalk" (chalking the cue) gave scope to the mannerisms familiar to all imitations.

"Shall I break, eh? Ha, ha!" Then came the stab at the ball, the anxious watching of its progress up the table, the despair at missing the spot-ball.

"Ha, ha! That's one to you." And Irving marks. And to the end he does nothing else, for his opponent makes his hundred in one break. The whole "business" is Irving's increasing tragic despair, until at the end he throws up his arms and cries, "Heavens! And I have not had one stroke at all!"

Irving was a born practical joker and enjoyed fun. He was always at his best after supper, enjoying a good

IRVING IN "THE CORSICAN BROTHERS."

long and strong cigar. His great friend Toole did not smoke. Every one who saw Toole in *Walker, London* (and who did not?) may not be aware of the sacrifice which that conscientious comedian made at every performance in the interests of art. He actually smoked a cigarette, whilst nicotine in any form was obnoxious to him. However, to ease the minds of his friends, who I am sure could not have enjoyed this most popular actor's performance had they known he was suffering for their pleasure, I had better say that the cigarettes were specially made, and Toole puffed the innocent flower of camomile. Mentioning Toole and his cigarette reminds me of his great friend Irving and the cigarette which the latter smoked in the first act of *The Corsican Brothers*. Every cigarette-smoker envied the way in which (apparently) Irving rolled that cigarette. He placed the paper in the palm of his left hand, threw some tobacco into it, and instantly, with one quick movement, the cigarette was perfect and between his teeth. It was pure sleight-of-hand—what is known to conjurers as "palming" a ready-made cigarette which was substituted for the paper and tobacco.

Irving was very liberal in his invitations to "go behind." Few are aware that Mr. Gladstone once appeared on the Lyceum stage. It happened thus: It is well known that the Premier and Sir Henry Irving had a great admiration for each other, and when Mr. Gladstone attended the theatre he always went round to Sir Henry's room to have a chat. He took quite as much interest in the mechanism of the arrangements as he did in the intricacies of the Home Rule Bill. One night, when *The Corsican Brothers* was on the Lyceum stage, Mr. Gladstone was missed from his box. He was behind

the scenes, having everything explained to him by Mr. Loveday. The music stopped, the players were in their places, and the curtain was about to be rung up, but Mr. Gladstone was still standing in the middle of the stage holding an argument with his guide about some detail, or recounting to him some theatrical reminiscence of

MR. GLADSTONE AS A SUPER.

days gone by. Mr. Gladstone wanted to see the scene through, and had no inclination to return to his own box. It was the *bal masqué* scene, in which boxes are arranged round the stage with people in them. Into one of these Mr. Gladstone was hurried; and although the audience saw that he was not in his former seat, few, if any, noticed him upon the stage. So he in his time played many parts, even to that of super at the Lyceum.

According to Colour-Sergeant Barry, who had for twenty-seven years been door-keeper at the Lyceum in Irving's time, Mr. Gladstone, when he visited the theatre, occupied a little wooden seat which had been let into the proscenium wall, whence he had obtained an excellent view of the stage without himself being seen by the audience.

I have never yet been able to analyse the mind that invents and circulates lies about public men. Malicious inventions may be not uncommon among 'Arrys and bounders, but that the educated man of the world should deliberately lie passes all understanding.

I was entertained at dinner in a large provincial town by its leading and most important citizen—and man of the world, and a really good fellow at heart. The conversation, of course, drifted into the most general of all social topics of the last ten years—the stage, when to my utter astonishment our host seriously informed myself and his friends that he considered mummer-worship overdone, and gave it as his opinion that our actors and actresses were an overrated, self-advertised lot, and illustrated this wild assertion by a scene he had himself, he said, witnessed in London. He assured us that Sir Henry Irving was in the habit of driving every morning to the front entrance of the Lyceum Theatre and, remaining in his well-appointed cab, of calling loudly for his letters, which were brought to him, there to be opened and read in public. Sir Henry amused himself by throwing the envelopes into the gutter, to be fought for and picked up by his worshippers and street boys, who were daily attracted to the spot by this familiar scene of London life, which my host declared he had himself witnessed. This, of Sir

Henry Irving, the greatest and most modest of all his profession!

The other and true side of the picture could at that time have been seen at the other side of the building. A cab draws up, out of which steps the well-known figure of Sir Henry, clothed in the most ordinary attire. He wears a low-crowned hat, rather in want of a brush; his private key opens a little private door, situated in a street deserted and practically private, into his private room; he finds his private secretary awaiting him to open his private letters. And should my informant of the front-door incident happen to call, I doubt if he would be granted a peep into the privacy of Sir Henry's sanctum.

Now, a perfectly true story of an actor-manager in front of his theatre happened in the old days of the Haymarket. Buckstone, passing under the portico in front of the house late one night, after the theatre had been closed, observed an intoxicated man vainly endeavouring to light a match, or rather several matches, on one of the pillars. It so happened Buckstone had just gone to the expense of having the front of the theatre painted; he could not restrain remonstrating with the destructive inebriate.

"My good man, why do that? I have just had those pillars repainted, and I really cannot allow my property to be utilised for striking matches."

With that hopelessly contemptuous look peculiar to gentlemen in an intoxicated condition, the stranger deliberately replied: "Oo are you? What d'ye mean? Go away. I—I tell you what y'are—you're an infernally bad imitation of that old fool B-B-Buckstone!"

CHAPTER XV

SIR HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE'S HUMOUR

Tree and Irving—Henry VIII surprises Wolsey—Tree and his taxi—He offers me an engagement—His *bons mots*—The Ambassador from Java—Tree and the critic—Tree and Sir Hall Caine

CHRONICLING Tree's rise to fame in the theatrical profession, it was remarked in a memoir at the time of his death, "Tree had paid the full and flattering penalty of genius. He had come to be included in the list of 'popular actors,' whom spry young gentlemen imitated at smoking concerts;" but the writer failed to state that it was as one of these "spry young gentlemen," imitating popular actors at smoking concerts and Bohemian clubs, that Tree first became known, before he adopted the stage as a profession. He was a brilliant, spry young amateur, and, as I have before stated, very popular at "Studios Smokes," which flourished in those days.

At one of these Irving appeared just as Tree was called upon for his famous imitations. Strange to say he was excellent as Toole and Wyndham, James and Thorne, and all contemporary celebrities but Irving—his Irving was not a success, and in the presence of the original his imitation was even worse. Before giving it he asked Irving if he objected. "Certainly not, go ahead," was the reply.

Tree gave his imitation of Irving first, and when he had finished his "turn" he approached Irving—who remarked, "Cap—i—tal! Cap—i—tal! I like the first one best, eh?—when you were yourself."

The same writer is, I think, wrong in attributing the success of *Trilby* to the interest in the published story. In America it certainly was so—it is a country of readers—but in England *Trilby* as a book lay on the bookstalls till Tree made it popular on the stage, and then it sold out rapidly. Tree's *Svengali* was a great performance—all the actor's little mannerisms, as well as his figure and voice, suited the part. The American who originated the part was too stout for it—but he originated the famous death scene, where Svengali falls backwards over the table. It was seldom Tree borrowed any "business" from another actor—I know of this one case. Tree went straight to nature; he was very observant. I have been with him when he has shadowed a peculiar man in the street, and studied his gait and habits.

In the play of *Henry VIII.* Bourchier made quite a hit by a peculiarly neat rebuff of Wolsey. He reclined at one end of a long seat, and Wolsey, to show his equality, prepared to seat himself at the other end of the same couch, but Henry quickly threw his leg along the cushion and baulked the intention. The "bit of business" was Mr. Bourchier's own, and without saying a word to Tree, he introduced it at rehearsal. Tree was delighted—but challenged Bourchier as to its kingliness, as soon as the laughter of the others who were present had subsided. Bourchier informed Tree that he had seen King Edward do that to Lord ——— the other evening, and he had "booked it."

Tree was very susceptible to the admiration of the

public, and he showed this in a peculiar manner—very different from Irving. Tree was always ready to play his part on the stage and off; Irving, on the other hand, did not care a jot once he left the boards, and generally arrived at his stage door up a back street off the Strand, in an old suit, an overcoat that required brushing, and a shabby square felt hat. Tree, on the other hand, left his stage door in the bustling Haymarket amid the crowds collected on the pathway waiting for the doors to open.

One day I called on Tree at midday; if I remember rightly during the season before the war. A long line of old ladies, and young ones too, were already assembled. After our chat in his palatial reception room at the top of the building we departed to our club for lunch. The door-keeper of His Majesty's asked Sir Herbert if he required a taxi. "Yes," replied the well-groomed actor, "but I prefer to select my own." Then he posed; in place of taking the stage, he took the footpath. His manner was superb; he frowned at one taxi, shuddered at another, beckoned to the third—it was all excellent acting, and it found its mark, for his admirers were hypnotically drawn from the outer wall of the building. The temptation was too great; I could not resist it. When Tree's back was turned I took off my hat, and, holding it out, walked along the line of spectators: "Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, first performance—thank you."

Not long after this we were jointly made a public show. Tree came down to unveil a tablet erected to the memory of the great actor Kean, in the sea-coast town in which I live. Kean, by the way, is said to have appeared at a fit-up theatre in the vicinity on behalf of

some travelling strollers who were stranded and penniless. Tree was entertained on his arrival by the Mayor, and I, as the chairman of the unveiling ceremony, shared the same open carriage with Tree.

"Furniss, what is this all about? Give me a point or two." I gave him all I knew—"Thanks, many thanks, don't use that yourself—you have saved the situation."

The ceremony took place on the highway at a cross road, the junction of two tramway lines. An impromptu

"THANK YOU, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. FIRST PERFORMANCE—THANK YOU."

platform had been erected, on which were seated Lord Brassey, Coulson Kernahan, and other celebrities, local and otherwise. As an old platform speaker I "let them have it." I am endowed with what is called a "powerful organ." The traffic went on, and so did I, and I drowned the traffic. Tree, in his reply, complimented me on my vocal effort, and said that he was then and there prepared to offer me an engagement. In closing the proceedings, I informed the crowd that I had actually been offered an engagement at His Majesty's Theatre—I was offered a post outside the theatre to call the cabs and carriages!

Sir Herbert was as great a wit as he was an actor and manager. I must record some of his *bons mots* I myself have heard him say, and one is that Sir Herbert disliked flattery, and he has said so in these words: "Flattery makes the great little, the little never great."

I had the pleasure of numbering Sir Herbert Tree as one of my friends some time before he adopted the stage as his profession. In his early days, as I have said before, he was much sought after as an amateur in London Society, and in those days gave very clever imitations of the leading actors. I have never seen any burlesques or parodies to equal young Tree's efforts. The cleverer they were, the nearer the original, the more they were appreciated by all but those burlesqued. Now the biter is frequently bit in real earnest, but Sir Herbert's shoulders are wide—wider than the late Sir Henry Irving's, who could not tolerate any one making fun at his expense. Sir Herbert Tree, apropos of his two funny imitators, made one of his best *bons mots*: "A man never knows what a damn fool he is until he sees himself imitated by one."

It is generally when men rise above Bohemianism their skins become thinner. There is no doubt Tree stood at the top of his profession—the Irving mantle of management fell upon his shoulders, but it covered a thick skin and a heart that was true to Bohemianism. He was, in fact, of all my clever friends, the least altered by success. I once heard him make a remark which sums up this peculiarity: "The greatest luxury of life is to be yourself and nothing else."

Of Bohemianism he said: "I drink to Vagabondage, the only bondage of the free."

Strange as it may seem, there are still some narrow-

minded persons who look upon the theatre as a sink of iniquity, and actors and actresses with abhorrence. It is a prejudice that is dying hard. Some years ago strait-laced folk in every sphere of life would prefer death to contamination with "play actors." One evening Tree was invited to dine with a very distinguished man. As soon as Sir Herbert entered the house, his host dragged him on one side and said, "For goodness sake don't let any one know you are an actor. My wife will not allow a member of your profession into the house—you must pretend to be something else—anything will do, but not an actor."

Sir Herbert smilingly acquiesced, but was somewhat nonplussed when introduced as "A distinguished ambassador from Java." He knew nothing of Java, not even where it could be found on the map.

Among the other guests at dinner was a friend who, being in the secret, fiendishly enjoyed "drawing" the "Ambassador," who parried his wit with gravity if with difficulty, for he knew absolutely nothing of the country he was supposed to represent. Unfortunately his *vis-à-vis* —a stern lady of commanding presence—did, and suddenly in all sincerity put the following question to the "Ambassador":

"I am most interested in the country you have just come from. Can you tell me how is the nutmeg trade?"

This was a critical moment—every one at the table waited for the reply. It came glibly:

"Madam," said Sir Herbert, with an air of authority, "I am pleased to say it has lately received an impetus from the importation of nutmeg graters from the United States."

"I am glad to hear so—but ah! pray, sir, how does that affect it?"

"Madam, pardon me, *that* is a secret of the nutmeg trade!"

Sir Herbert frequently puts in his own little tit-bits in plays he acts in. If I am not mistaken, one is—"All men are equal except myself—Nero."

In a dramatic scene he brought in the following pen-picture: "I never saw such tempestuous passion, like a mad passion of sea, drowning drowned mermaids on a shrieking shore."

Sometimes Sir Herbert's witticisms were whispered into the ears of the great. Speaking of suffragettes to an ex-Premier, he remarked, apropos of the attitude these fanatical ladies adopt, "You cannot knock off a man's hat, and then expect him to take it off."

Another blossom of wit from the Tree: "It is better to like a little too much than much too little."

Sir Herbert's satire was truly delightful. A friend of his, in whose geniality he detected a touch of east wind, asked him how it was that Sir Herbert, buffeted by fate, was able to turn a smiling countenance to the world. "Ah!" replied Sir Herbert, "I'll tell you, my dear fellow, the secret of my philosophy. Like the ostrich, I hide my head in the sand, and that attitude enables me to turn a smiling back to my enemies."

In presenting his portrait to a critic, he wrote in the margin: "To the worst of critics and the best of friends." His friend, the critic, was rather surprised with this curious inscription, and asked Sir Herbert for a little explanation. Tree quickly replied, "When you put more butter into your criticisms, I'll say you are the best of critics—and the worst of friends."

There is a story Tree told me—in the following way. I believe my readers may have seen it before, but I should

like to tell it *my* way—as Sir Herbert has related it in my presence.

When Sir Herbert was rehearsing *The Eternal City* at His Majesty's, the assembled company were interested in a scene in which he had to throw Miss Constance Collier roughly on the ground. This performance had to be repeated over and over again, poor Miss Collier, in the interests of art, throwing herself into it—or being thrown on the boards by Sir Herbert—it's all the same thing. She was panting and dusty and dishevelled, when, as an excuse perhaps to give her a breather, the distinguished author of the play, Mr. (Sir) Hall Caine, stepped forward and, in his quiet, deliberate manner, related how he had witnessed in a remote village theatre in Italy a most remarkable scene of seeming brutality between the leading actor and leading lady, terminating by the actor flinging the lady over his head. He could never forget the terror of the audience or the effect of that awful thud on the boards.

Sir Herbert Tree gazed for a moment at the massive form of Miss Collier, felt his biceps, shrugged his shoulders, and beckoning the full stage of performers to a dark corner of it, said with the awe-inspiring air he could so well adopt:

"What Mr. Hall Caine has just told us is very interesting—but, ladies and gentlemen, I have seen a far more brutal and blood-curdling performance than that. It was years ago, in a very small theatre indeed, at Margate. The brute of a man caught his wife by her heels, and with tremendous force swung her bodily over his head, and bashed her head several times, crash! crash! on to the floor. She was Judy!"

CHAPTER XVI

SOME UNREHEARSED STAGE EFFECTS

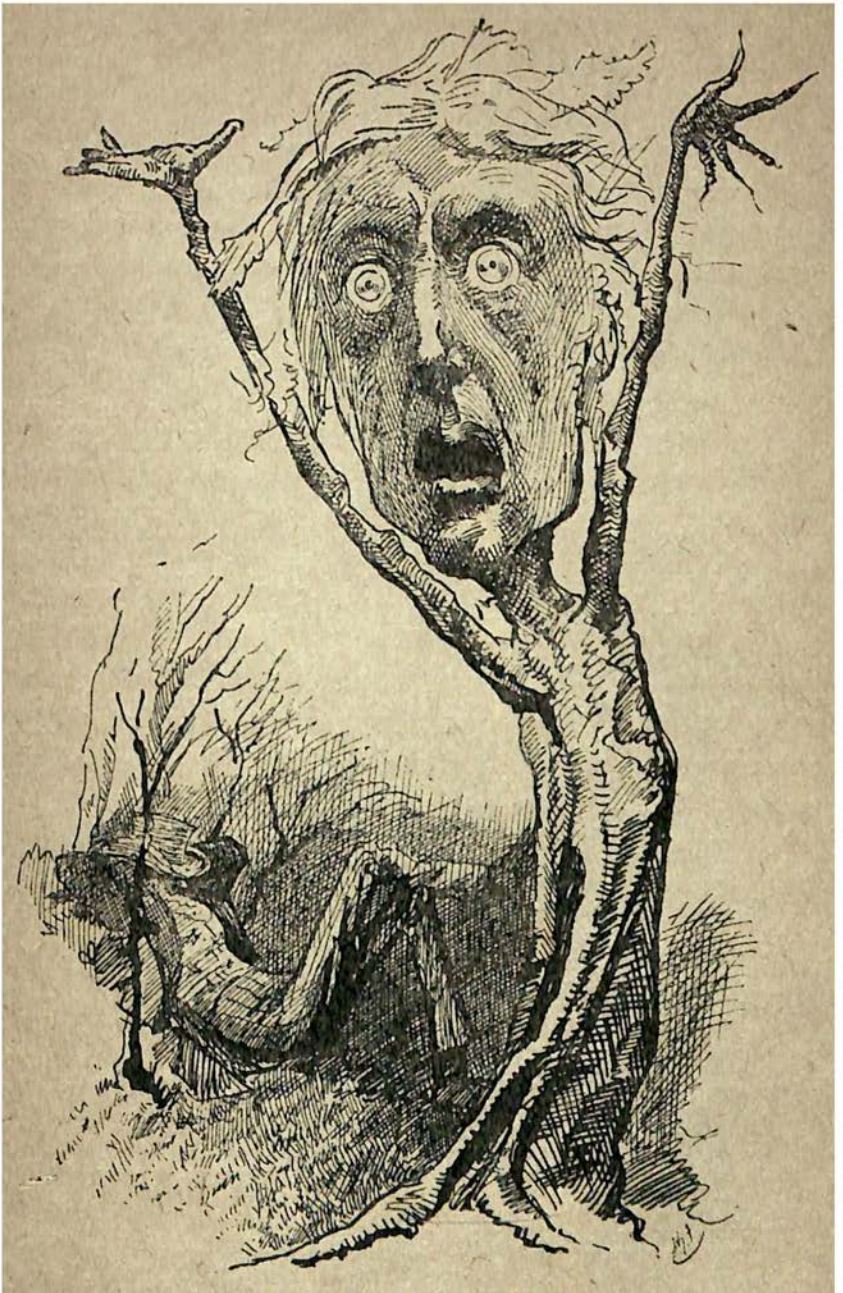
Misther Levy—*Our Flat*—Mr. Kendal's trousers—Leah's dilemma—The "star-trap"—Mr. Gladstone on the stage—Miss Mary Anderson's pose—Mrs. Kendal in "Pantomime"—Toole's dresser—The two Berthas

THE following unrehearsed effects and startling, if amusing, incidents of the stage are only such as I have either witnessed myself or have heard of personally from those who have. Most of them, to my knowledge, have not so far been described in print.

No more popular figure existed in the old Theatre Royal, Dublin, than Levy, the conductor. He was the father of some very celebrated musicians—one of them was Levy the cornet-player, who made such a sensation with his cornet and his diamond rings in the Promenade Concerts at Covent Garden, under Rivière's direction, twenty-five years ago. Old Levy had a very large family ("Paganini redivivus" was another of his famous sons), and a story is told that when conducting the overture to an opera in the Theatre Royal, a boy jumped up from under the stage and said:

"Misther Levy! Misther Levy! Your woive has just had a babby!"

"The Lord be praised for all His mercies!" said the conductor, keeping the baton going.



A STUDY OF TREE IN AMERICA.

In a few seconds the boy again appeared.

"Misther Levy! Misther Levy!"

"Well, boy, is anything wrong?"

"Missis Levy has had another babby, sor!"

"Thank Heaven! All's well!" And the baton waved with greater vigour, working up the orchestra to a tremendous flourish. Once more he was disturbed by the same messenger.

"Misther Levy! Misther Levy!"

"Git out, boy! What's the matter now?"

"Begorrah, there's another! As y' call 'em, trins!"

The conductor rose and, putting down his baton, said:

"Gintlemen, it's toime I wint home and put a stop to this!"

Here is another Irish story. The great baritone, Signor Foli, when singing in grand opera in his native city, Cork, had to sing one of his songs from a stage balcony. The arrangements were not very perfect, and the manager, fearing the carpenter had not made the balcony strong enough to sustain the weight of the big man, told off two assistants to hold it up from beneath. The lengthy Signor was only half through his song when one man said to the other:

"Be jabers, Moike, this Oitalian is moighty heavy!"

"Let's dhrop him, Pat; he's only an Oitalian, afther all!"

Voice from the Signor above: "Will ye, ye devils, will ye?"

"Tare-an'-'ouns! Pat, but he's an Oirishman; hould him up for the loife of yez!"

A friend of mine—one of the most popular authors of the present day—began life, like so many authors, as an actor. "The worst actor that ever trod the boards," he

SIR BEERBOHM TREE.

said to me a few days ago. "I could never recollect my part or my 'business,' and without my glasses I am as blind as a bat. My first chance was in a travelling company as the lift attendant in *Our Flat*, and I walked on the first night with them on. This caused the ire of the principal actor and manager to rise. 'Whoever saw a lift-man in pince-nez?'

"'All right,' I replied. 'I'll take them off to-morrow night, but I will not answer for the consequences.'

"The next evening I entered, and the first thing I did was to knock over a table and fall into a seat I didn't see. When I went off there stood the actor-manager ready to kill me. 'You have spoilt all my business,' he said. '*I* was to knock over that table, you fool, and fall into that chair. The performance is ruined.'"

And so was my friend's career as an actor.

The Kendals went over to America some years ago, I believe for the first time, with the hall-mark of English appreciation strong upon them. The house was crowded to see our cleverest English actress and her talented husband.

It was a Society play, and in those days, far more than in the present time, the young men about town, and the old ones too, looked upon a theatre as an English education in modern dress, from the curl of the top-hat to the toes of the boots.

Mr. Kendal, the best-dressed man on the stage, was furious when he discovered that his valet, in some indescribable moment of forgetfulness, had folded his trousers wrongly, so that the crease came down the side instead of the front of the leg.

There was no time to alter matters. The curtain was up, the trousers were on, and Mr. Kendal made his debut.

The following morning the play received a portion of a column, the actor and actress the rest of the column, but the "new fashion in pressing trousers" ran into several columns.

But to return to the Irish. A very different effect was once caused by an actor's clothes. When the late

"THEM'S CLOTHES."

Sir Henry Irving was a young actor and made his first appearance in Dublin in a costume play—what actors would call "a thin part"—he looked the part to perfection so far as the thinness went. Perhaps there was no actor in our time that looked as thin in some costumes as Sir Henry. A new-comer to the famous old Theatre Royal, in which every member of that distinguished stock

company was familiar to the man in the gallery, called forth critical scrutiny. So when young Irving walked on in his peculiar mannerised way the dead silence of the house was broken by a man in the gallery calling out to his friend on the other side of the circle, "Tare-an' -'ouns! Phwat's that?"

"That? Whoi, them's clothes. I suppose the man phwat owns them will come on afther them."

I have never come across an account of the contretemps at Liverpool, when Miss Bateman, in the height of her fame, was playing the Jewess in *Leah*. The great scene of that once popular drama is that in which Leah returns to the home of her lover to hear of his marriage with another woman, and the effect is piled up in true melodramatic style when a pretty little child runs out of the house. Leah, to slow music, calls the child towards her, and asks, in trembling tones, "What is your name, my little child?"

"My name is Leah."

The effect of this reply upon the actress and upon the audience was sublime. But one day that youthful member of Miss Bateman's company was unfortunately unable to play. A substitute had to be found and rehearsed. The stop-gap happened to be the little daughter of one of the stage-carpenters, hailing from the Emerald Isle. Leah was perfect at rehearsal. "My name is Leah!" Then came the performance. It was a Saturday night and the house was packed. The great scene was begun with its usual intensity. The critical moment arrived. The child ran out; Leah called her. The child was struck with stage-fright.

"What is your name, my little child?"

Tears.

The all-important question was repeated to slow music.

Pause.

The question was repeated a third time, by which the effect was rather heightened than destroyed.

More tears, and then—

"Moi name is Biddy Maloney, Miss."

The effect of this reply upon the actress and upon the audience may be better imagined than described.

There is a well-known farce, *No Song, No Supper*, which for generations has been popular with the public as a curtain-raiser. A meal takes place on the scene, and the author made it a *sine qua non* that a real leg of mutton should be boiled with trimmings and placed on the table every night his piece was played. This leg of mutton was subsequently enjoyed by the "guests" in the scene. The flavour of the joint, rising to the floats, made the poor scene-shifters sitting up aloft both hungry and envious. At last one of them made a bargain with one of the "guests" that if he let down a line with a hook at the end, he would attach it to the leg of mutton, and that they, working above, should at least have one night's supper.

It so happened the applause on the fall of the curtain, probably a Saturday night, was greater than usual, and the curtain was rung up at once, when, to the delight of the audience, the leg of mutton was seen rising like a balloon.

The favourite American actress, Mrs. Gilbert, in her *Stage Reminiscences*, includes an amusing incident that occurred during the performance of *Faust* in Dublin. Something went wrong with the trap that should have let Mephistopheles down to the lower regions. He stuck half-way, and all the efforts of the stage carpenters failing

to move him down, the curtain was lowered. A voice from the gallery shouted, "Hurrah, boys, hell's full!"

The "star-trap," too, is responsible for many a contretemps such as the one here to be related. A clever friend of mine, the well-known author, the late Richard Dowling, of Dublin, had his chances as a dramatist ruined by a "star-trap" incident, on the first night of his only play in London. His drama was of the most sensational kind, and was produced by a lady who once ran the theatre now known as the Queen's. She played the heroine, a fair young lady, whom, without being ungallant, one might describe as "buxom." The great scene is the attempted murder of the heroine by the villain in a house built on piles over the river Thames. The lady is a somnambulist. There is a trap-door in the centre of the hall, close under which rushed the deep waters of the Thames. To slow music the heroine, like Lady Macbeth —with a clearer conscience certainly, but with as dim a light in her hand—walks down the stairs. The villain opens the trap-door, and the lady walks into it. Ha! ha! she is gone! But, alas! Ha! ha! she didn't go. Not being in Dublin, no wit was present to call out "Hurrah, boys, the river's full!" neither was it the fault of the "star-trap," but of the "star" herself Unfortunately she had *not* the figure of a Mephistopheles, and as she had not been measured for the trap, she stuck fast in the opening, and so the curtain and my aspiring dramatic friend's countenance fell simultaneously.

A little incident of the memorable first night of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* is fresh in my memory. Pinero and I dined together at the Garrick Club—or rather I dined and he, like Beau Brummell, "toyed with a piece of toast." We drove immediately to the theatre to-

gether; before I had time to take a dozen whiffs of my cigarette he "went behind," and I to my seat in the centre of the stalls. The curtain was going up as I entered. The scene on the stage of the finish of the little dinner-party at Tanqueray's was so realistic I, in my absent-mindedness, actually took a cigarette out of my case and put it in my mouth, and was about to strike a match when my neighbour in the stalls stopped me. I really imagined for the moment that I was one of the small dinner-party!

I now come to a first night at the Lyceum when Miss Mary Anderson made her initial performance in the romantic part of Perdita. In the great scene she is wooed by the rough, picturesque lover, on this occasion played by "Handsome Jack Barnes." As she rose to her feet it was perceived, to the delight of us all, but to the discomfiture of the actors, that Mr. Barnes's wig had caught in the shoulder-clasp of Perdita, and rose with her, and furthermore refused to be detached for some time.

When Miss Anderson arrived in London she was only known to English people by the art of the camera. Her first appearance, as I have said, was as Perdita, and I thought her the most charming figure I had ever seen on the stage. I was the first artist in England to make a sketch of her; she kindly posed for me after a performance at the Lyceum, and when she asked me the position I would like her to take I mentioned one she had assumed in the second act, in which she stood holding the drapery in her hand, which was resting on her hip.

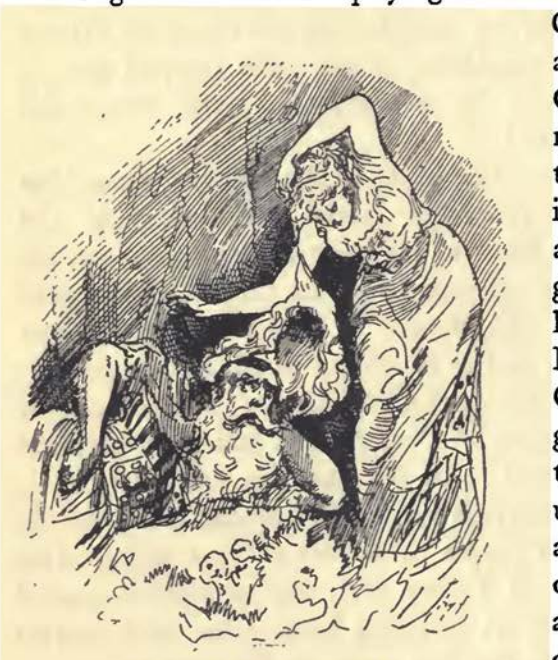
"Do you really mean that?" she asked.

"Yes; that attitude struck me as the most artistic of all your graceful movements," I replied.

"Well," she said, "as a matter of fact my robes had

come unfastened and were falling off, and I was holding them on; but I shall now purposely make them slip in the same way." And that pose was repeated nightly during the run of the play.

Even this popular actress could not escape the chaff of "the gods." She was playing Galatea in Sir W. S. Gilbert's play—and a charming Galatea she made—when, in the critical scene in which she appeals to the gods to enable her to bring Pygmalion and Cynisca together again, the actress held up her arms and, unconsciously looking up at the gallery, cried out, "The gods will help me!" To Miss Anderson's surprise, all the occupants of the gallery, as if by pre-arrangement, called out with one voice, "We will!"



PERDITA'S PREDICAMENT.

Some of the unrehearsed effects on the stage take place when the curtain is down. As is well known, Mrs. Kendal has a pretty wit, and when at rehearsal has a pleasant way of distributing the fruits of her life-long experience of the stage. A young actor in the cast at

His Majesty's, not appreciating the kindliness of the distinguished actress in thus giving her valuable advice, was gently reprimanded by Sir Beerbohm Tree, who said it was the duty of any one in the profession to defer to the great exponent of the art dramatic, whose opinions were golden. Subsequently, during the rehearsal, the scene arrived in which Falstaff is secreted in a clothes-basket. Mrs. Kendal raised an objection to some of the "business."

"Is it not possible to 'cut' some of this?"

"I fear not," said the manager-actor, "the British public demands that the immortal bard shall be rendered *in toto*."

"So be it," said Mrs. Kendal, "but you must remember that it is long since I acted in pantomime."

Miss Ellen Terry appeared in the same production.

As the two great actresses were walking on the stage a few nights afterwards, a wag standing at the wings said in an audible aside to a friend, "Now then, make way for the stars." Mrs. Kendal, overhearing this remark, turned round and curtsied. "Stars, did you say?" queried she, "I think you ought to say 'ancient lights'!"

I have referred previously to the best-dressed actor and his trousers. Now let me introduce a story related by the worst-dressed actor, our dear friend, the late lamented Johnny Toole, and the very worst trousers that ever appeared on the stage. Toole wore them whenever he played the Artful Dodger in *Oliver Twist*, which part delighted the theatre-going public for many years. In a way these trousers were historical. They were really old, had never been patched up, and, like much of the glory in the old masters' paintings, time had improved them—at least, for the purpose of the character actor. They really belonged to Murray, the famous Edinburgh

actor, who wore them for some years on the stage in a small part in a play entitled *The Heart of Midlothian.* Scott had seen old Murray in the part, and was particularly struck by the trousers. When Charles Dickens saw Toole play the Dodger, and in turn admired the trousers, Toole informed the great novelist that Scott had been also impressed with them; and, to use Toole's own words, "Dickens was very much interested; it seemed to make him thoughtful, and he mentioned the name of Scott with something like reverence."

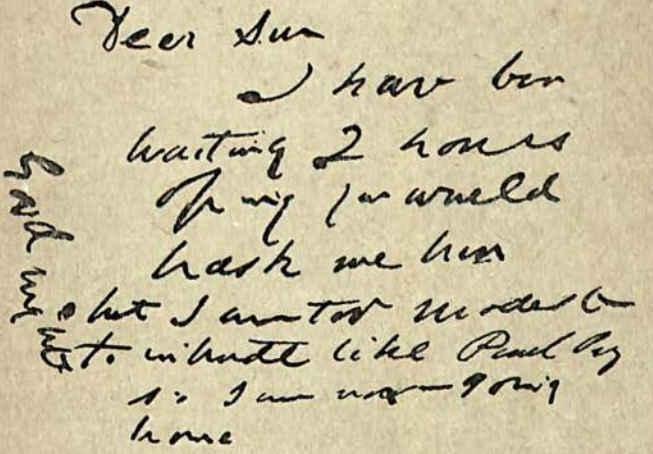
TOOLE AS THE ARTFUL DODGER.

Well, these historical garments were once the cause of an unrehearsed effect at the door of a theatre, and all but led to a great disappointment to a large audience assembled at a benefit. Toole, who was playing in another theatre, ran round to the one at which he was already due to play the Artful Dodger. The doorkeeper was new to his work. He did not know Toole,

but only saw these shabby old trousers, and absolutely refused to believe they could be worn by any one with any pretension to respectability. Toole was in a dilemma; the stage was waiting. "Well," said the witty actor, "you don't understand me. I'm not Mr. Toole, whose name you see on that play-bill. I'm only his dresser."

"Ah, that's a 'oss of another colour; why didn't you say so afore?"

Poor Toole was in the same way denied admittance to


Dear Sir
I have been
waiting 2 hours
Opening your world
hask me here
but I am too modest
to intrude like Paul Pry
so I am now going
home

his own club. I was giving a dinner-party which, when the theatres were closed, was in full swing. The hall porter came in to me shortly after eleven to say that my cabman had been waiting. He refused to go, and was trying to force his way into the Garrick. I told him I had no cabman waiting, and to tell the impostor to be off. Shortly afterwards the above note was placed in my hands, and in walked a cabman, to the astonishment of the hall-porter and waiters—no other than dear Johnny Toole, coat, whip, trousers and all to the life.

Toole relates a unique unrehearsed effect that happened to him when playing in *Dot*, a dramatised version of "The Cricket on the Hearth." The young lady who played Bertha, the blind girl, was suddenly taken ill after the first act. She fainted in her dressing-room, and, all means of restoration proving useless, the manager was forced to ask a lady of the company who was not acting that night, but who was in the theatre, to take the part of Bertha, so that the piece could proceed, Toole assuring her that he would give her the words as the play went on. She refused to accede to this.

"I'll go on and do my best, but I must read the part."

"Great heavens!" Toole replied. "That would never do. You're the blind girl."

"Then I shall not move," she replied. "I'll read the part or nothing."

Irving, who was playing John Peerybingle, went in front of the curtain, and informed the audience that in consequence of the sudden illness of the actress whom they had seen playing the part of Bertha, another lady was going on in her place, but would have to read the lines.

Sympathetic applause showed that the house accepted the peculiar solution of the difficulty. It was prepared to see a blind girl reading.

Toole went on, and in one of the most pathetic parts of the play looked round for the entrance of the blind girl. To his astonishment, he saw two ladies wrestling at the wings. It appears that the two actresses, the lady who had fainted and the other who had agreed to take her part, were at daggers drawn. The fainting lady had recovered in time to hear that her rival was taking her place, and she was determined at all risks to proceed.

This sudden double change was so unrehearsed that in her excitement the real Bertha, who was blind, walked

A CRISIS IN TOOLE'S PERFORMANCE OF "THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH."

on with a defiant look of triumph and her eyes *wide open*. She remembered her part, but quite forgot, although the audience didn't, that she was blind!

CHAPTER XVII

ART ON THE STAGE

A blank canvas—Peg Woffington—The "Divine Sarah," sculptor—Tree's match—Alexander's hand—Miss Terry's gown—Neville's ribbon—Falstaff's boot—Nance Oldfield's coffee

SINCE the days of Hogarth artists have been the companions and friends of actors. By artists I mean those few who are men of the world, and not the mole type of painter, who apparently goes to sleep for the winter and wakes up for the picture shows in the spring.

There is a great deal in common between the actor and the artist. The true artist is strongly dramatic, for should not every picture be a play? And the actor must be an artist, for should not every scene he acts in be a picture?

Both enjoy and learn much from each other.

Still, I have often been impressed as an artist by the want of care in details which is sometimes exhibited even in the best theatres, and by the most painstaking and assiduous of stage managers. A few instances must suffice to illustrate my meaning.

I have seen, for instance, at a West End London theatre the typical artist of modern comedy in the velveteen coat, red tie, and auburn moustache, who always falls madly in love with a daughter of the house in the first act,

painting a water-colour sketch upon paper with oil brushes, and many other similar discrepancies.

At another London theatre of good standing, I remember there was a play being performed, in which the wife, daughter, female servants, in fact the whole household, seemed at one fell swoop to have fallen easy victims to the irresistible fascinations of another disciple of the palette who had arrived at a country house to paint a portrait of its mistress. I never saw anything like it. Every one on the stage seemed to be in love with him, and the poor man appeared to be positively at his wits' end to get his work done among such a multitude of *amours* as he was called upon to conduct. His interruptions were endless. The canvas upon which he was painting the *chef-d'œuvre* was, judiciously as the sequel will show, turned away from the footlights so that the audience could only see the back of it. First the heroine would come sidling in, and, gazing at it with a hysterical simper, exclaim, "Oh, Alphonse, my heart's idol! Can it be that I am indeed so wondrous fair as that!" and turning aside mutter in *sotto voce*, "Does he then indeed love me?" and similar remarks. Presently a saucy housemaid or *femme de chambre* would pop in with a note, and catching sight of the priceless work of art on the easel, declare with irrepressible enthusiasm—"Why, it's missus! and the very image of her, I do declare! Ain't the dress beautiful?" Just for all the world like certain art-critics at the Academy. A little later came the husband's turn. He had a very tragic scene in front of the portrait, and then, at a critical moment, when all the characters were gazing at it together, and uniting in a chorus of unqualified admiration at the Sir Joshua-like genius of the velvet-coated one,

the easel ignominiously toppled over, and laughter rang long and loud through the house when the canvas which had excited such unbounded enthusiasm was discovered to be perfectly blank!

Making every allowance for the wear and tear of the managerial mind upon first nights, and with no wish to

"THE CANVAS WAS DISCOVERED TO BE PERFECTLY BLANK."

be the least hypercritical, it certainly did occur to me that the property man might have been instructed to paste an oleograph upon the virgin canvas, even if the scenic artist, with heaps of trouble upon his mind at the last moment, owing to the recalcitrant back-cloth, or a too-obtrusive sky-border, would not condescend to daub in a portrait of the most elementary description.

In these days when dramatic critics are nothing if they

are not exact and omniscient, it may be interesting to record one or two instances of almost ludicrous napping on their part. In the praiseworthy reproduction of *Masks and Faces* at the Haymarket Theatre a few years ago, when Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, now Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft, received columns of eulogy in the press about the wonderful dresses and *mise en scène* of the revival and were justly commended for the minute attention to details which was displayed, not a single critic detected that Triplet had the picture which he was supposed to be painting placed against the window in such a manner that no light could possibly have fallen upon it, whereas the merest tyro in art is aware that when a painter is at work he invariably places his easel at right-angles to the window so as to receive all the light that is possible. Again, Madame Sarah Bernhardt, who is supposed to be something of an artist as well as an actress, is called upon in one of her marvellous creations to enact the rôle of a sculptor, and to model a certain bust in view of the audience. This fairly electrified the "snarling brood," as the late James Albery was wont to call the theatrical critics; but when going into rhapsodies over the technical skill in handling the clay which Madame Bernhardt exhibited, they showed that they knew little of the artistic tricks of actors and actresses; as a matter of fact she does nothing of the kind. The bust is modelled and baked, and over it is placed damp clay of the same colour. This the talented actress merely pulls off, leaving the beautifully modelled head underneath.

I well recollect the first night of *La Tosca* at the Lyceum. The "Divine Sarah" looked as young as a fascinating girl of seventeen and spoke with that charming voice which all who have heard her will

ever remember. Her lover is at the moment of her entry supposed to be painting a fresco in the church or

"THE DIVINE SARAH."

cathedral, but he paints it on the usual stretched canvas. Fresco-painting has to be done on freshly-prepared cement put on in bits as the painter works, and his colours dry simultaneously with the cement or whatever preparation he may use—another incongruity in art matters on the stage, and strange to say, as I have mentioned, Sarah Bernhardt is an artist. So was Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, when he produced Sir Hall Caine's drama *The Eternal City* in which a portrait in clay again played an important part. The portrait is in progress, therefore the clay is wet, in fact Lal Brough as the assistant in the studio had to see that

that was done—in the presence of the audience. Sir H. Tree, a few minutes later, to show his contempt for the sitter, strikes a match across the bust and lights his cigarette, an effective and subtle piece of business which went down with the audience, but roused me to ask Tree over supper after the play how he, an artist, could do anything so absurd as to light a match on wet clay, and anything so clever, for I knew the clay was wet.

"You artists are too critical," he replied. "It will never strike the public one can't light a match on wet clay."

"But how did you?"

"Ah—simple enough! I had let into the clay at the back of the bust a piece of metal purposely made to strike matches upon—same as you see in railway carriages."

Sir George Alexander produced a play by Mr. Alfred Sutro, *John Glayde's Honour*, in which there is a studio scene with the usual studio properties around. The statue of the Venus of Milo, without which no artist's studio is complete, was prominent—was too prominent, in fact, for it was as white as snow, and evidently had just been sent from the modeller's shop—as well as other casts hanging on the walls. This grated upon the artistic eye, for I have never seen any studio, except that of a young lady who has just left the art schools, with a statue that was not well browned with smoke and dust, probably disfigured with memoranda of pencils, and adorned with some property or perhaps the solitary tall hat of the Bohemian artist. Furthermore the cast of a hand, hanging on the wall, which was just the height of the actor's, was exactly the pose of Sir George Alexander's hand as he stood in front of it and made his most effective

speech. A hurried note from me that evening, I believe, rectified these artistic blemishes in this clever production. Still, all the private letters in the world to actors from an artist will never cure them of going on to the stage with clothes, hat, and boots fresh from their costumier's. Over and over again a hunting man will come on to the scene and describe some splendid run he has just had with the hounds, or he may be a country gentleman who lives in the saddle, yet his boots are spotless: there is no muck upon them, and no sign of chafing of the stirrup-leather.

These are small details, but it is not artists only who detect them, but all whom they may concern in these latter items, hunting men and squires.

I suppose that ladies, who form the greater portion of theatre-goers, are quite reconciled by this time to seeing the village maiden, the poor cottager's daughter, the fisherman's child, in the worst weathers tripping about the muddy roads and storm-washed shores in the lightest of muslin gowns and the daintiest of French high-heeled shoes. But were an artist to paint a picture and so depict nature, the critics would soon remind him of his faults.

In large productions some startling incongruities have met my eye. Miss Terry's famous performance of Lady Macbeth, immortalised by Sargeant's painting of her in that part, now hanging in the Tate Gallery, shows her in a dress that Lady Macbeth never could have worn. It is most effective, and is made out of beetles' wings.

It so happened that I was present at an interesting little dinner, at which Miss Terry, who sat opposite to me, was admiring the dress of the lady by my side, then Lady Randolph Churchill, subsequently Mrs. George Cornwallis West. Lady Randolph wore an evening

gown made of beetles' wings. Miss Terry, directly after dinner, asked Lady Randolph if she could inform her where in America they could be obtained. Lady Randolph tore off a small portion of her gown and gave it to Miss Terry. This was the specimen out of which Mrs. Comyns Carr built the now famous Macbeth dress which was never seen except on Miss Terry in Scotland.

But even the best of actors make mistakes deliberately perhaps, as the following will show. In one of the famous Drury Lane autumn dramas, that splendid actor, Henry Neville, played the part of the Premier in the House of Commons, in which he made a great speech, but having some Order of the Garter, or something of that kind, he wore the broad ribbon across his shirt front. I took the liberty of pointing out to Neville that no members in the House wore their orders.

"True, my boy, perhaps, but then, you see, how on earth would the audience know I was the big wig in the scene if I hadn't some distinguishing badge?"

I have seen actors wear the Order of the Garter on the right leg instead of the left, which reminds me of the story of the German lithographers who reproduced an historical English picture in which the King wears the Order of the Garter. They despatched a telegram after their proofs had left them, to send it back, as they found they had made a great mistake. They had only given the King one garter, and the production went forth with the order on both legs.

Good music well sung must at all times be a source of delight; but if you do happen to have a soul for music, but are at the same time endowed with a strong artistic taste, your eye will be constantly offended and your sense of humour tickled by the incongruities that pervade

serious opera. In the drama the player must make up for his part; the cherished moustache has to be sacrificed at the bidding of Thespis, and the Grecian nose remodelled with paste and besmeared with paint and powder: indeed, the dressing-room of the actor of to-day is as much a studio as the workshop of an R.A. But what shall we say of the Italian operatic singer who egotistically struts through his part, sporting his hirsute appendage in defiance of all artistic taste and accuracy? This bare-faced impudence (to make an Irish bull) is as rampant among the supering chorus as the leading artists. The voice is the thing, costume and make-up are beneath consideration. Whether as soldiers, courtiers, villagers, saints, or sinners, the Italian operatic singers parade before us to all appearance as third-rate foreign waiters or organ-grinders. As a rule tenors are far from being Adonises. Fancy a beautiful Violetta, madly enamoured of an Alfredo such as this! This is a sketch from Nature made at Covent Garden a year or two ago. Though the gentleman's voice may be his fortune, his face most decidedly is not, and were I a manager I would put up in the dressing-room a notice saying, "No SHAVE, NO SALARY!" The costumes worn would make a Planché turn in his grave, and the finest voice that ever was heard cannot compensate for the audacious wearing of beards and moustaches in periods when no such appendages were worn.

I recollect being annoyed by a scene in Grand Opera, representing the seashore. The rocks were most inartistically placed at regular intervals, like the hoops on a croquet lawn. It was a Balfe opera, in which the heroine dies of thirst, and I was informed that as a certain *prima donna* who sang this dry part could not get

through the great effort without refreshment, she rolled over stage rocks, behind which were placed pots of stout at frequent intervals, at each of which she had a pull as she turned over in supposed anguish.

What theatrical dresses are made of would be an interesting matter to discuss. Sir Henry Irving's princely garments, that looked all right from the front, were so dear to him he never would alter them, and as time went on they would have disgraced an old clothes shop. I have had all his costumes in my studio, so I know, and Miss Terry, in her interesting Reminiscences, mentions the fact that Sir Henry would never have anything done to smarten up the costumes he had worn so long.

Hurried dressings often bring about ludicrous incongruities in costume. I remember in my early days the massive form of the well-known English singer, Ansly Cooke. I was in his dressing-room at the old Adelphi when he was playing Falstaff. "Ah," he said, "I am thankful for one thing, I am blessed with an angel for a wife—in fact, I do not know whatever I should do without her. I do not trust to my dresser, my household genius comes every day and places all my things ready for me. . . . By Jove, I'm late! Here, just help me on with these infernal things; this basket body of mine—here, stuff 'em all in! I am on late, and I've sent my man out for a paper. Thanks, tie it up there—capital arrangement, isn't it? and as light as a feather—all basket, hollow, nothing inside. Well, that angel of a wife of mine —Hang me! I've only one boot on—where the deuce is the other? Overture over? I must be on in a minute —Here, Thomas, how long you've been—my other boot! Look sharp! Can't find it? but you must, and pretty sharp too! Didn't see to the things? Well, that angel

of a wife has—What, no boot! Gad, what has the cat of a woman done with it? Blow me! if that old cow comes meddling here again—That's my call! But where's my boot? Oh, why am I cursed with such an ass for a wife?"

He stormed, he raged, his dresser and I and the call-boy searched everywhere for Falstaff's other boot. The stage waits; the singer curses his matrimonial fate, it's all his wife's fault. The language and the room rise in temperature considerably. He storms, he rages, the stage waits, and just then my amateurish dressing causes his basket costume to fall off! That moment I felt it time to escape, but just as I was picking up my hat, I cast one glance at the strange, exciting scene. Falstaff, in despair and rage with one boot, and his massive frame parted from his waist lying in front of him; but to the delight of all, from within that basket body stuck out the missing boot! In the hurry of dressing, it had been stuffed inside.

Of all actresses, Mrs. Kendal excepted, perhaps Miss Terry is the readiest. When on tour with my lecture entertainments I have more than once found myself in the same hotel as my friends, Sir Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry, so we foregathered a good deal, and I have many agreeable reminiscences of those pleasant days "on the road."

I am reminded of one dinner in particular by turning up a letter from Miss Terry in which she writes, "How funny you are to remember about the coffee! Now I remember it!" Shall I ever forget it! It was in the Windsor Hotel in Glasgow. Miss Terry invited me to dinner at the actors' hour—four o'clock in the afternoon. It is the lecturers' hour also, for later dinners are fatal

to any one having to talk from stage or platform for a considerable time, beginning at eight o'clock.

After our late lunch or early dinner, or whatever one

FALSTAFF'S OTHER BOOT.

cares to call such a meal, a patent coffee-maker was produced, but no methylated spirit was to be found.

"Ring for some! Nonsense, I am a woman of resource," said our hostess. "See, I'll make the coffee boil by matches alone," and so she did—it took twenty minutes or more, but during that time Miss Terry became

so delightfully excited with her self-imposed task, so merry and vivacious that had such a scene taken place on the stage, it would have proved one of her greatest triumphs. She danced and jumped about, and sat on the floor to watch, and on the sofa to cheer, and ran about for more boxes of matches, and eventually poured coffee out to the tune of the "Conquering hero comes." Norman Craig was busy making those property books he, as the young poet, later in the day, flung about in that charming comedy *Nance Oldfield.* In fact, Miss Terry was Nance in real life in that coffee-brewing scene, and possibly just engaged in doing what Nance Oldfield would have done under similar circumstances.

CHAPTER XVIII

BOHEMIANS IN PARLIAMENT

Young Disraeli, dramatist—Authors in the Commons—The Dogman and the Grand Old Man—Dr. Wallace's entertainment—Lays of Parliament—T. H. Bolton and the Theatre—Dr. Kenealy—Henniker Heaton—Charles Bradlaugh—H.H.H.—Sketches—A photographer—"Chalk Talks"—Labouchere and the Ladies

WHEN I first knew the House forty years ago it was familiarly called "The Best Club in London," a club in the proper sense of the word, signifying a meeting-place of those of equal tastes and talents. "Best" would therefore qualify the club as one of the highest order. At that time, waiving a few exceptions, its members were socially representative men, and the few eccentric or Bohemian members were also of a higher class than those who now constitute the conglomeration of men sent to Parliament—who at this present moment are starting an agitation for higher pay!

For eighteen or nineteen years I enjoyed a privilege granted to no other pressman before or since, consisting of a special order, signed by the Lord Great Chamberlain, giving me permission to go wherever and whenever I wished in the Palace of Westminster—purely, of course, for the purpose of my work—a privilege, I need hardly add, which I enjoyed to the utmost.

Until 1880 I was an ordinary spectator of Parliament, and at a very early age I frequently sat in the Strangers' Gallery, little dreaming that in time I should be so closely identified with its doings. The one member who attracted me more than any other was Disraeli; there was a mysterious fascination in his wonderful personality, though he was then enjoying his "peace with honour" and gradually retiring from what Gladstone called "practical politics." Lord Beaconsfield, as young Disraeli, might certainly be claimed as a Bohemian. He not only wrote essays and stories many years before he tackled his famous novels, but he also tried his hand at writing plays.

YOUNG DISRAELI AS A DRAMATIST.

The great Disraeli was once called before the curtain—"a call was raised for the author, but this compliment was understood to be of rather an ironical kind." Yes, Benjamin Disraeli, so late as June 29th, 1868, appeared as a dramatist. The piece was *The Tragedy of Count Alarcos*, first published thirty years previously (1839), after Mr. Disraeli had enjoyed solitary travel in the inspiring region of Spain, and had conceived himself to be a poet, and laid out the ground plan of a tragedy. "*That*," he wrote, in his preface to the play, "was the season of my life

when the heart is quick with emotion and the brain with creative fire; when the eye is haunted with beautiful sights, and the ear with sweet sounds; when we live in reveries of magnificent performance, and the future seems only a perennial flow of poetic invention. Dreams of fantastic youth! Amid the stern realities of existence I have unexpectedly achieved a long-lost purpose."

Alarcos was a catchpenny speculation of Astley's, a terrible fiasco, and I fear only brought Disraeli into ridicule. The young author appeared and to his astonishment met with a most hostile reception. He quickly disappeared, and so did the play. He was more successful later on in life—in the political theatre at the other side of Westminster Bridge.

The Bohemian spirit suits neither of the Houses of Parliament. Literary men and actors are ever anxious to shine as politicians—their ambition is to show the "ordinary members," one by his matter and the other by his manner of elocution, "how to do it." Actors have never got further than announcing their determination to leave the stage for the political arena.

Sir George Alexander was the last actor, I believe, to declare this intention, but had he lived to fulfil his ambition I fear the parliamentary routine would have effectually damped his ardour.

Justin McCarthy records the fact that the author of *Sam. Slick*, a humorist of the first water, was simply made ridiculous in Parliament by no less a person than Mr. Gladstone, who was supposed to be void of humour. The delightful writer of books for children sat in the House of Commons as Knatchbull-Hugessen and afterwards in the

House of Lords as Lord Braybourne, though he filled certain offices of state anything but effectively, and "gave the idea of one who had been sentenced to imprisonment in the House for some offence of which he was not guilty."

In more modern times that fascinating author, A. E. W. Mason, represented Coventry for some years. He evidently found the House equally depressing, almost as depressing as the House found another clever writer, Sir Gilbert Parker. On the other hand the Irish party included many brilliant Bohemians, who were equally brilliant with their pen. Dealing with Bohemianism in Parliament one has, with few exceptions, to confine the subject to the Irish benches.

Membership, to a great extent, has become a trade, and political tradesmen were practically unheard-of in the days to which I am now referring. On looking back I recall many interesting characters; then the Irish "obstruction" tactics were invented by an extraordinary yet popular character, Joseph Gillis Biggar by name, a hunchback pork-merchant with a rasping voice who carried obstruction to such a pitch that on one occasion the House sat continuously for forty-one and a half hours. Another peculiar member was the respectable old Radical Peter Rylands, who on one occasion—an "all night sitting"—rolled himself up on a long couch to rest in the outer corridor directly under Ward's fresco painting of "The last sleep of Argyle," and some young members of Bohemian inclinations took off the sleeper's boots, and hid them away. And I remember how the enraged Peter, when the division bell aroused him, ran through the cold stone lobbies and sat in the House in white-stockinged feet for the rest of that celebrated night.

There was also John Henry Maclure, known as the Whitehead Torpedo, a fine, handsome, John Bullish, Manchester man with a rubicund face and a mass of white hair, who was for years the most typical Bohemian in Parliament.

But the member for Rotherhithe, Cumming Macdona, and a member of the Garrick Club, was an out-and-out Bohemian; he was originally in the Church, and was known all through the country as "Macdona the Dog-man," having introduced pedigree Newfoundland dogs into England. In a garden of West Kirby in Cheshire where he had a house was a dog cemetery with rough tombstones inscribed with the names of his most famous dogs. From West Kirby he was summoned to Hawarden to see the Premier about a living at Cheadle. He was terribly nervous in the presence of the Grand Old Man, but it so happened a dog barked at the visitor, and Macdona made some doggy remarks that were new to Gladstone. This set Gladstone talking about dogs until he had to return to his study, when he shook the Rev. Cumming Macdona by the hand, assuring him that he was the best-informed man he had met for many a day! Macdona was the first clergyman to take advantage of the Church Disabilities Bill and leave the pulpit for politics.

Scotland has sent more than one genuine Bohemian to Parliament; perhaps the most entertaining of the lot was Dr. Wallace, ex-editor of *The Scotsman*, who on one notable occasion during the debate on the first Home Rule Bill kept the House in a paroxysm of laughter. His humour was continuous for two afternoons and his satire appreciated by every one except Labouchere. For some reason Dr. Wallace bombarded the member for North-

ampton with his wit: the fact that Labby had just changed his opinion regarding Home Rule might have been the cause. The Doctor amused the House by declaring that "time was too precious to investigate the psychology of the parliamentary tee-to-tum." This great effort was more of an entertainment than an entertaining speech, and was really more suited for Bohemia than Parliament.

The genial member of the Savage Club, William Woodall, who sat for Hanley, was one of the most popular

WILLIAM WOODALL'S GUESTS IN THE HOUSE.

Bohemian M.P.s in the eighties. His little dinners in the House, which comprised all kinds of interesting public men, and more particularly public women, were unique. Though a strong supporter of Gladstone and a member of his Ministry to boot, there was nothing orthodox about him. Being a champion of Female Suffrage, he numbered among his friends its strong supporters, including the fascinating Mrs. Fawcett and many others interested in the movement, together with a representative sprinkling of lady journalists and authoresses, Marie Corelli for instance. Bewitching actresses too, who, if deterred by

their profession from dinner-parties, enjoyed tea-parties on the Terrace. Then I recall his famous Sandwich Soirées, held at Queen Anne's Mansions; his smoking concerts, at which many Members of Parliament and Bohemians from the Savage Club and others assembled, were the best of their kind in London. I remember at one of the gatherings Mr. Gladstone was so intensely interested in the card tricks of Charles Bertram the conjurer that the old politician sat on the floor so as to keep a close watch on the manipulation and to try to detect, if possible, how the tricks were done.

FARMER ATKINSON.

In the eighties there was a picturesque but erratic Bohemian Member of Parliament of the name of Atkinson, who represented Boston. He was conspicuous for his flowing white hair, his white waistcoat, his carelessly-tied salmon-colour neckcloth, and his very careless observance of the rules of debate. He figured as one of the bores of the House, and as such was fair game for both members and pressmen. To retaliate upon those who satirised him in the press he gave dinners in the House to any members that could be collected and invited the men on whom he wished to be revenged.

For this purpose he wrote some "Lays of Parliament," and had the doggerel neatly printed.

Henry Labouchere, editor and proprietor of *Truth*, was his first victim :

Oh ! Labby, it is sweet to read
The Truth that from thee flows.
But oft it seems a noxious weed :
One wonders where it grows.

One thinks upon the early days,
When strangers and colleagues
Wished to be able thee to praise
For labours and fatigues.

But it was awful to be told
That when thy chief enquired
Why he and all the staff were sold,
By work (not done) required.

Thou wentest into his Bureau,
And, asked Why nothing done ?
Said, " I came here to make a row,
And pleasure only own."

I fear, alas, that is thy rôle,
And always will be so ;
Thou hast no heart, thou hast no soul,
Away then must thou go.

No power in Parliament art thou,
No leader e'en of few ;
Thou mightest just as well bow-wow,
Or melancholy mew.

We will not let thee lead at all,
Nor write a word of " Truth " ;
Thou'lt useless live, now, as of old,
Just like thy early youth.

Go to thy dolls, and dress some more;
More infidels protect;
We'll give thee up, and evermore
Thou and thy "Truth" neglect.

Done by LYRE, at the bottom of a well (but not well done).

HENRY LABYRINTH, JUNIOR,
AT THE *MAESE, HOLLAND,
This 27th day of July, 1891.

* *Query.*—Should it not read "MAZE"?
The printer's devil will be amazed if it does not.

I was the intended second target of his wit. The dinner was arranged, the verses written and printed, the guests invited. However, an hour or two before the appointed time, as I sat in the Press Gallery (without any intention of being present at the dinner given in my "honour"), I had the pleasure of witnessing a "scene" in the House between the Speaker and the same member, which ended in "Farmer" Atkinson being expelled the House! A note was sent up to me that the dinner, in view of the recent occurrence, would take place at a club. I heard afterwards that this erratic member's overcoat was found in the Members' Cloakroom, and a bundle of notes, I believe amounting to a large sum of thousands of pounds, discovered unprotected in an outer pocket.

T. H. Bolton, a London solicitor, who posed as the Great Napoleon, whom he somewhat resembled in face and figure, but was known at the Garrick Club as "Solomon Pell," was for years a familiar and hard-working Bohemian member. He gave up much of his time to members of the theatrical profession and acted

as an Honorary Solicitor to their associations; I have frequently seen him in a corner of the Outer Lobby of the House, giving legal advice to a bunch of beautiful theatrical ladies, and then seen him rush into the House to make a fighting speech on his famous subject of the Tithes Bill. He ended his days as a Taxing Master in Chancery.

Professor Rogers, a learned, big, rough, uncouth, coarse-tongued man, affected the ultra-Bohemian style

BOLTON AND HIS THEATRICAL CLIENTS.

in dress and address. In drawing him for *Punch* I depicted him giving "a classic tone to conversation"—conversation, it need hardly be said, more fitted for the lowest Bohemian than the House of Commons.

I suppose the name of Lord Henry Lennox should be included among Parliamentary Bohemians, though he was better known to the public in theatrical matters as a hanger-on of the old Gaiety, and also a frequenter of the music-halls of the period. In the House of Commons

he seemed out of place; he wandered about from one bar to the other, and looked upon pressmen in Parliament with distrust. He resented "Lobbying," that is, pressmen mixing with the members to gather special information or notes for personal descriptions of legislators. Mr. Moy Thomas recalls the fact that as Lord Henry was taking some refreshment at the bar then situated in the Inner Lobby, he turned to a representative of the press and snappishly remarked, "There, make a note of that! Publish the fact that I have had a glass of wine!"

LORD HENRY LENNOX.

"Well, I certainly would if I saw your Lordship drink a glass of water."

I have to go back to the time I was a visitor and not on business bent in the House, to recall the most notorious Bohemian member. That was the celebrated Kenealy. Dr. Kenealy was at one time the most-talked-of man in England—a barrister made famous by defending the "claimant" in the Tichborne trial. At the Bar he was simply treated with obloquy, in Parliament he was laughed at. It was the latter hit the harder.

The historians of his time refer to Dr. Kenealy as "a social pariah and a legal outcaste." "The Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, which had hitherto been considered a respectable and intelligent constituency, raked among the dung-hill of lost reputations, and selected as their

representative one who rejoiced in the distinction of being 'the most unscrupulous maligner of his day.'" Yet as a young man he was one of the most famous in literature, a scholar and a poet; most refined and tender verse emanated from his pen.

When the newly-elected member entered the House, he stood at the table, amid the laughter of the House, alone. "I have to point out," said the Speaker, "that according to the usual practice of this House, when an honourable member appears for the first time in the House, it is customary that he should be introduced by two members. I now ask whether there are two members of the House prepared to act as sponsors." To the consternation of the House John Bright rose and said that he would, out of deference to the will of the large constituency that had elected Dr. Kenealy. And he thus accompanied the doctor to the table. It was one of the most dramatic incidents in the history of Parliament.

Sir John Puleston, although "Constable of Conway Castle," was a Member of Parliament, and, as befitted an old medical student, a thorough-going Bohemian and never so happy as when entertaining journalists, artists, and actors either in the House or in the Castle.

Henniker Heaton, the originator of the Penny Post, was a colonial, originally a newspaper advertising man in Australia, and, like Sir John Puleston, fond of Bohemianism. All of these felt for him when he received a terrible snub from the Postmaster-General he was continually baiting in those days—Mr. Raikes. Heaton wanted to know if the Postmaster-General had consulted advertising agents with regard to the revenue which would accrue from the advertising on the back of telegram forms. "No, sir,

I have not. The fact is, it does not appear to be so much a question of advertising agents as of advertising politicians."

Raikes was Postmaster-General at the time the Post Office jubilee took place. He was very unpopular, particularly with the men, and I designed a parody of the celebrated Maclise envelope in their favour, which, signed, sold for half a sovereign each, and I believe is now nearly as rare as the original.

"Old Daddy Longlegs wouldn't say his prayers, Take him, Black Beadle, and chuck him downstairs."

I had just begun my attendance on the Houses of Parliament as the artist representative of Mr. Punch, when Bradlaugh—perhaps the most Bohemian of all members, began his dramatic career in the Commons. My pencil was at once busy, and after Gladstone, Harcourt, and Churchill, I sketched and caricatured Bradlaugh more often than any other Member of Parliament. He was not a member for a long time. It was his furious efforts to take his seat that gave me the greater part of my material, which I used not only in *Punch* but in other papers and also in *Vanity Fair*. This remarkable man, originally a ranker in a cavalry regiment, was endowed with a wonderful voice, which reverberated throughout the House. I sketched him orating at the bar of the House. The bar is a long brass rod, which pulls out like a

telescope across the gangway inside the House; any one standing outside the bar is technically not in the House. I sketched him being dragged out of the House, literally kicked down the stairs and flung with his clothes torn to pieces into the Palace Yard. I sketched his fight again and again over the five long years it lasted, and I have

BRADLAUGH FLUNG INTO THE PALACE YARD.

sketched him when he proved himself one of the hardest-working and most respected of members.

The most intellectual members in my days were the most Bohemian. Professor Rogers I have already mentioned, but not Sir Henry Hoyes Howorth—"H. H. H. of *The Times*"—who for a long while contributed under those familiar initials some of the most learned and delightful letters. He was in appearance—and I trust

I am not wrong in saying, by inclination—a Bohemian. To artists a three-H pencil represents extreme hardness: but in this particular case three-H applied to a politician meant the opposite—genial, soft-tongued, and unconventionally entertaining.

Strange to say there was another Sir Henry who, like Sir H. H. Howorth, hailed from Manchester way. He was equally popular in Parliament—the celebrated scientist, Sir Henry Roscoe. I remember him one day scaring the frequenters of the Inner Lobby, both members and pressmen, by showing round a long glass tube containing deadly microbes, supposed to have been extracted from the air entering the House. Descriptive writers fled, and the professor was not troubled by the lobbyists that afternoon.

"H. H. H."

Sir Charles Dilke's connection with the press, and also his delightful little dinners, marked him out as a Bohemian. He was also one of the best-informed men who ever sat in Parliament, and was intellectually head and shoulders above the highly respectable mediocrities who predominated.

The Right Hon. James Lowther, familiarly known to

all as "Jimmy Lowther," was for many years popular on both sides of the House, even with the Home Rulers when Chief Secretary for Ireland: but then he was a keen sportsman, and the Irish dearly love a racing man, and also it was impossible to raise his temper by heckling him on Irish topics in the House.

Although many journalists become M.P.s no artists aspire to that honour, though many attend the House for business purposes, and take as keen an interest in politics, both inside of St. Stephen's and out of it, as journalists do. True we have had a sprinkling of amateurs. Sir Frank Lockwood was quite a capable caricaturist, and so, I believe, was Colonel Saunderson; while, if we can call photography an art, there was that energetic and highly successful snapshotter, Sir J. Benjamin Stone. *The Pall Mall* referred to him as follows: "His passion for photography, which had the appearance, at first, of a harmless little fad, is now recognised as a mark of systematic foresight. Sir Benjamin was the first to realise, in a serious way, the great service which the camera might render to the fullness and accuracy of history." Sir Benjamin photographed here, there, and everywhere, but if I may be pardoned the joke, he laid the foundation stone of his reputation in that world by his work in the Commons.

When I wrote that no artists aspire to parliamentary honours, I forgot Sir John William Benn, who was Member for Devonport. When I first saw him he was occupying the platform at the Birkbeck Institute; supplied with coloured chalks and a large roll of paper, he made rapid sketches of Dickensian characters, and spoke in between. However, he soon dropped what is termed by Americans "chalk talks," and merely talked, and that to some purpose, for he talked himself into the House

of Commons, then out of it, and then back again. He was very successful on the London School Board, where no doubt around him he found plenty of character worthy of Dickens.

Perhaps Henry Labouchere was the most typical Bohemian, never conventional, never orthodox, frequently using the House as the dog upon which to try some new departure of his in public affairs. His excursions into debate were seldom taken very seriously; in fact, Labouchere never intended them to be, they were simply "good copy" for the benefit of his next issue of *Truth*. One day there was a serious debate upon women being eligible as Members of Parliament. When it came to Mr. Labouchere's turn to speak, he drew a picture of ladies sitting sandwiched between the other members on the benches of the House. "He was an old man," he said, "it would not affect him." He was speaking out of sympathy for the young men in that House. He would not willingly submit them to such a temptation (*laughter*).

SIR BENJAMIN STONE.

If there was a beautiful lady on each side of a young man urging him to vote on some private Bill—and saying, "Oh, do vote for this"—he was afraid the member would succumb (*laughter*). He wished to prevent as far as possible any such risk.

He wished to guard against the dangers which would arise from the adoption of this resolution. When a woman had got an idea into her head you could not knock it out. You explained to her that she was in the wrong. Instead of answering she simply repeated what she had said before (*laughter*). It was urged that she would develop if she had a vote. Darwin told us that we had sprung from worms: how long had it taken any member present to develop from a worm? Millions of years. We should not give votes to women for millions of years, while they developed (*laughter*).

One must mention another journalist and equally clever member, Thomas Gibson Bowles. Unlike Labouchere, his interruptions in the House were always to the point, exceedingly well thought-out, and witty, and also contained most useful criticism. Some men jump suddenly out of professional life on to the Government bench without any preparation or any idea of Parliamentary procedure, and thereby add to the hilarity of the members. The most notable case in my time in Parliament was Rigby, a famous advocate, afterwards Lord Rigby. He was transplanted from the bench to the table without any experience of Parliamentary speaking or usages, and he could not accustom himself to standing at the side of the box, where all must stand, but invariably—amidst roars of laughter from all sides of the House—gradually worked his way round and stood in front of it, thereby flagrantly transgressing the traditions

and rules of debate. At the same time he would shift the lapels of his coat as if it were his gown, and he almost called the smiling Speaker "my lud."

There were a score or more Bohemians in Parliament in those days, splendid characters I regret I have not space to deal with, including William Allen, "the Gateshead Giant," and the oracle from Newcastle, Joseph Cowen.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME PARLIAMENTARY OFFICIALS AND SOME NOBLE LORDS

Some Speakers—Captain Gossett—The "Black Beetle"—The Chaplain—The Rev. F. E. C. Byng—Dr. Percy—Some Lord Chancellors—Sir William Harcourt—The Black Rod—Lord Clanricarde—Lord Courtney—Lord Dunraven

It may be safely assumed that no man ever entered Parliament with the fixed idea of becoming Speaker. Lord Hampton was a Whip, and therefore not much in the House itself. Lord Peel was almost a silent member. Gully was practically unknown. The present Speaker certainly won his position as a capable and popular Chairman of Committees, which after all should be the stepping stone to the Chair, though as a matter of fact it is not; yet he could never have dreamt of becoming Speaker when he entered Parliament, or he would, in lieu of wearing a wig, have shaved off his beard and moustache. The same may be said of Lord Peel. The House, in both cases, was so determined to have these two gentlemen to preside over it, that it accepted them beards and all, which is the highest tribute to their popularity.

The Speakership of the House of Commons is thought more of than even the Lord Chancellorship, for the Speaker is an absolute autocrat; every member has to "catch his eye" and address everything to him; he is

Peel.

Lowther.

BEARDED SPEAKERS.

under the Speaker's thumb when the House is sitting. The Lord Chancellor on the Woolsack is practically ignored; his power is felt outside the debating chamber.

It is strange that at the time the members were staid and proportionately dull, the officials of the House were by comparison Bohemian. Brand, the Speaker, was a genial sportsman; the Sergeant-at-Arms was an old Navy man (Captain Gossett), who, whatever he may have been in the House, was out of it a jolly old sort. He was a little round man, rather bent, with a merry face and somewhat bowed short legs. As Sergeant he wore the official black Court dress, cutaway coat, knee breeches, and black silk stockings. His back view strongly resembled a black beetle, and as such I always depicted him in *Punch*.

THE BLACK BEETLE

His private room on the first floor, leading out of the Lobby, he made into a club-room, to which he invited certain members who were good fellows, irrespective of politics, from both sides in Parliament. They became "members of Gossett's room." Tremendous decanters of whisky and boxes of cigars were provided by members, for the benefit of all. I was a member and enjoyed many a pleasant hour. The Sergeant had all my caricatures of him, which I had drawn for *Punch*, cut out, and stuck round the mantelpiece; all the choice spirits—I do not mean in the decanters, but of the House—were members of the room. Gossett's successor did away with such tokens

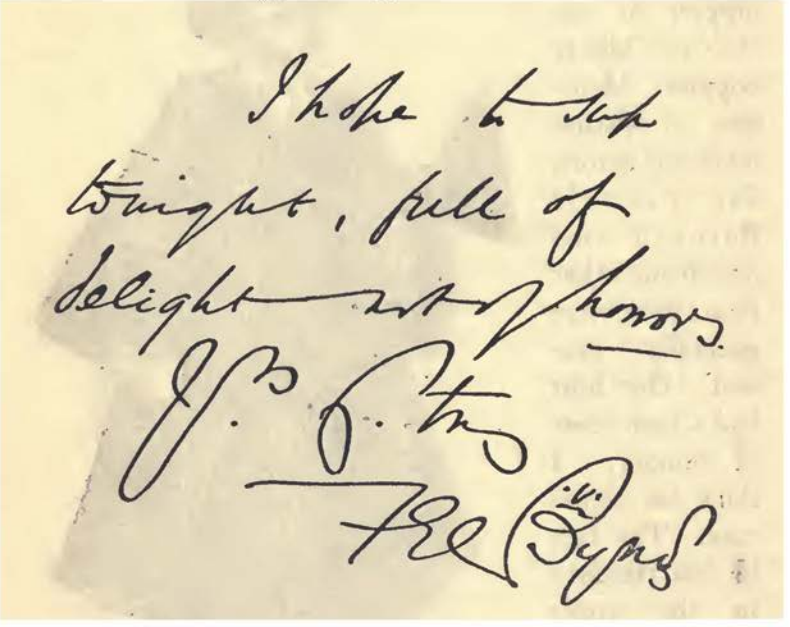
of Bohemianism and bound everything again in the room with red tape.

The Chaplain to the House in those days, the Hon. and Rev. F. E. C. Byng, was another jolly Bohemian, outside Westminster. His little Bohemian suppers at his club were highly popular; Members of Parliament and actors, Sir Francis Burnand and myself and other *Punch* men, were generally present. Our host had a keen sense of humour. I show his signature. The face he has sketched in the upper part of the "B" is really a very good portrait of himself. When my caricature of him as Chaplain to the House appeared in *Punch*, he sent me a sketch representing a coffin, two daggers, a death's-head and cross-bones, and my initials, under which he wrote "Take warning!"

THE CHAPLAIN TO THE HOUSE.

Byng was afterwards the Earl of Strafford, and Canon Wilberforce, the ardent teetotaller, became Chaplain in his stead. He was an interesting man, and I have been a guest at his lunch-parties in the Cloisters of the Abbey; but it is difficult to be jolly on lemonade.

Another good old Bohemian in my early days of Parliament was Dr. Percy, the Engineer-in-Chief to the Houses



of Parliament. He was a member of the Garrick Club, and after dinner, when he and I returned to St. Stephen's, I often went the rounds with him, in underground Parliament. In fact, during one of Mr. Gladstone's great speeches, when there was no chance of a seat anywhere, Dr. Percy allowed me to sit in the table of the House of Commons. The table is really a ventilator open at the bottom, so that one can sit inside and look

through the ornamentation on the sides close to the front benches.

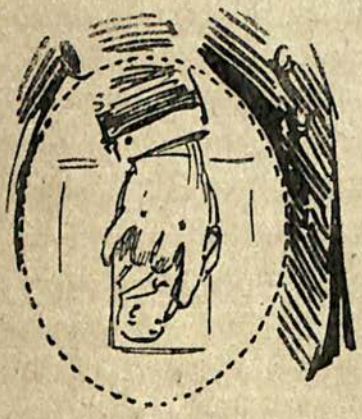
To the ordinary visitor on an ordinary day, the great and only salient feature of the House of Lords that attracts attention is the Lord Chancellor on the Woolsack. As I have said, the noble lords have little to do with him; in the House he is just one of themselves, and when he wishes to make a speech he has to leave the Woolsack and move some yards away from it, for technically the Woolsack is not in the House at all.

Besides being "keeper of the King's conscience" he is maker of judges and bishops and all sorts of officials, so in legal circles it is the most highly-coveted post under Government, and it must be said that when I knew Westminster it was generally given to the best fitted lawyer. Lords Selborne, Cairns, Herschell, Halsbury, and the great Lord Chancellor, Lord Finlay, attained to their position by reason of their undisputed ability. It was never the reward of mere party services, or given to shelve a disappointed place-seeker: when certain prominent politicians, who merely qualified by being called to the Bar in their younger days, were mentioned, their ambition was not gratified, for jobbery was detested.

It is no secret that the late Sir William Harcourt's cherished ambition was to get into the Upper House, not as an ordinary Peer, but as the Lord Chancellor of England. But the picture drawn by Lord Randolph Churchill, and modestly adopted by myself, showing the House of Lords "all Harcourts," had such an effect upon those in authority that the dream of "Historicus" never came to fruition. This drawing of mine in *Punch* was referred to by the late Lord Salisbury in a celebrated fighting speech he made in the House of Lords.

Perhaps the most Bohemian, by that I mean the most unconventional Lord Chancellor, was the brilliant lawyer Lord Buckmaster. He was entertained at dinner by the Garrick Club—an unusual occurrence—and is one of the most entertaining members of that club.

Black Rod in the House of Lords is in the same position as the Sergeant-at-Arms in the House of Commons, only he is a person of greater importance. He frequently walks straight into the House of Commons in the middle of an important speech, and summons the members to the Upper House on the occasion of the Royal assent being given to the Bills which have been passed.



SHOWING HOW I SKETCH IN MY POCKET.

In the "good old days" I write about, Black Rod, like the Sergeant-at-Arms, was an old retired Navy man, also round and bent; but, unlike my black beetle, he wore trousers. He was an old martinet and objected to my sketching from my corner under the Press Gallery. This Black Rod's red-tapeism forced me to practise sketching in my pocket, with the aid of a short pencil and cards, and by keeping my little finger firmly on the side of the card to act as a pivot to the hand. It is quite as easy as spirit-rapping, or any other conjuring trick, if practised long enough. The first sketch I thus made in my pocket was of Black Rod himself. I was standing right under his nose at the moment; Bradlaugh was asking permission for a lady, probably Mrs. Besant, to sit on the seats behind the bar.

To judge by appearances the members of the House of Lords are far more Bohemian than the members of the Commons. It is not an easy matter to decide who is a Bohemian and who is not.

I suppose all poets are Bohemians at heart, and certainly Lord Tennyson was one in outward appearance. When he presented himself to take his seat in the "Gilded Chamber" he lost his robes, and a set were, I believe, lent to him for the occasion.

LORD CLANRICARDE, AN ODD FISH.

The Marquess of Clanricarde, "the absentee landlord," who was the cause of so much political friction and the most hated man in the arena of Irish politics, lived as a Bohemian. I saw a good deal of him, as he resided for many months of the year in the same sea-coast town as I do. It was no common thing to see the noble lord walking home after a visit to the fish-market, which was situated a long distance from his hotel, with fresh herrings, for which he had driven a bargain, strung on to his fingers. He was immensely rich, but miserly in his ways. I have seen him after dinner hold up to the light a small bottle which had contained seltzer, and finding a small quantity at the bottom of the bottle, call for the cork and carefully screw it in, and take it

up to his room. He dressed terribly, but wore beautiful jewellery.

If a rough exterior, a rough voice, and rough manners constitute a Bohemian, then Lord Courtney certainly came under that category. For years he served in the House of Commons as Chairman of Committee, that is, he acted for the Speaker when the House was technically not a House, discussing a Bill in detail.

LORD COURTNEY.

Any one filling that office, in spite of the fact that it may be broad daylight, must wear evening dress. Courtney's evening dress would have disgraced a super in a travelling theatre. His everyday attire was worse, and in the House of Lords he seemed to take pleasure in attending garbed in rough tweeds of various hues and of the village tailor's cut. His bright yellow waistcoat and Muller hat were conspicuous. He was not popular in the House of Commons, and when his name was mentioned for the Speakership his own side in politics joined the Conservatives in voting a more popular member to that important post. The Muller hat fitted him better than the Speaker's wig would have done.

Mention of waistcoats reminds me that the late Lord Abinger, a man of a very different stamp, genial, accomplished, and an aristocrat, sported a terrific waistcoat of a draughtboard pattern, but, being a finely-made specimen of humanity, he carried it off well. From his youth

Lord Abinger had a strong attachment for theatrical Bohemianism, and in late years was seldom absent from the Garrick Club.

A peer who has presided over the Savage Club "wigwam," when entertaining the great Liberal chief, Mr. Gladstone, and other celebrities, must, I suppose, be reckoned a Bohemian, and a good one too! He has been a newspaper war correspondent, a military steeplechase rider, a yachtsman who has twice tried to wrest the America Cup from the New York Yacht Club, and an authority on hunting—this is the popular Earl of Dunraven, who, when addressing the House of Lords, stands in an unconventional attitude at the cross benches, with one knee on the bench—at least so I have sketched him, as if he had the tiller in his hand and was on the look-out for political squalls.

Lord Rathmore, the distinguished scholar, who as Mr. David Plunket sat for many years in the Commons as member for Dublin University, one of our greatest orators, is, I may safely say, a Bohemian. He never appeared to take politics really seriously; probably the dullness of the Commons bored him, and only when called upon on great occasions to speak did he wake up.

I well recollect a typical illustration of his apathy. He was promoted to a peerage, and on the evening that he took his seat in the House of Lords Sir Edward Clarke gave, in honour of the event, a little private dinner, to which I was invited. The new peer came into the room and went round the cards on the table, but failed to find his own. He asked his host where he was to sit. "Why, there, of course, on my right." "Oh, of course! But I read the name of 'Lord Rathmore,' and I wondered who the fellow could be!"

CHAPTER XX

THE PRESS GALLERY

The old days—Bohemian members—Work under difficulties—Mr. Paul—Sir Edward Russell—Inaccuracies—"Cookin' porpoises"—Speeches reported—"By courtesy"—I am "incorrect"—*Au revoir.*

WITH the exception of the artist of *Vanity Fair*, I was the first artist who troubled to live among the Members of Parliament for the purpose of studying and drawing them; previous to this artists engaged in drawing the members worked altogether from photographs—and sometimes from very old photographs, too! They placed the heads on imaginary bodies—bodies, I should say, they imagined would tally with the faces—and trusted to luck for a complete full-length portrait.

During the eighties and nineties, certainly the most interesting period in politics of our time, there was no more entertaining place than St. Stephen's. The Fourth Party, the Grand Old Man, the Home Rule Bill, Randolph Churchill's rise and fall, Bradlaugh, Obstruction, Parnell, Chamberlain, the Unionist Camp, excitement followed excitement. No years in the history of Parliament were so rich in political incident, and no personalities more interesting than those who filled the stage.

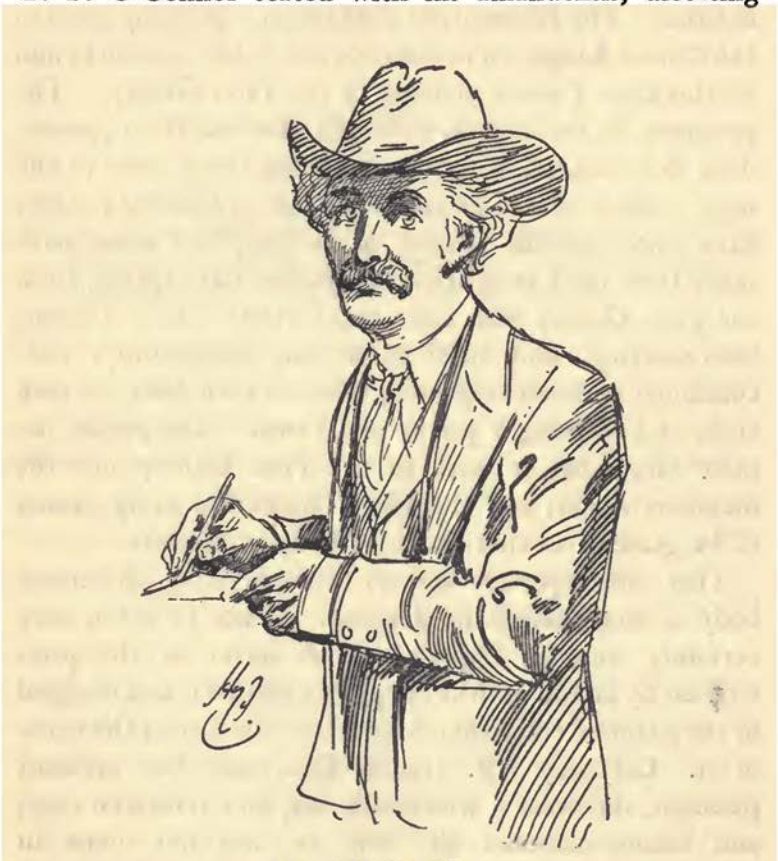
For some years I had the monopoly of illustrating Parliament, not only for *Punch*, but in more serious and

elaborate work for *The Illustrated London News*, *The Graphic*, *The Daily Graphic*, *Black and White*, and other periodicals, both in England and America. I gave for four years an elaborate entertainment on the platform entitled "The Humours of Parliament," in many parts of the United Kingdom, in America and in the Colonies; and all this time I was a member of the Press Gallery. The pressmen in Parliament, although selected from journalistic Bohemia, have numbered among them some of the most notable men of literature, including Dickens; others have since become famous as authors, and some have made their mark as politicians. Judges have sprung from the Press Gallery into fame and fortune. It is a silent, hard-working, and most interesting community, self-contained and self-respected, with its own laws, its own club, and wielding a power of its own. The public has little idea what it owes to the Press Gallery nor the members either, but the Government has every reason to be grateful to that exclusive body of workers.

That the reporters are, or were, a truly Bohemian body of men there is no denying. If not in habit, they certainly were in appearance. A letter in the press written by an old ex-M.P. deplored this fact, and dragged in the æsthetic craze then so much to the fore as the cause of it. Certainly Mr. Harold Cox, now the brilliant publicist, did wear a wideawake hat, and velveteen coat, and salmon-coloured tie. But he was not alone in discarding the tall hat, "the hall-mark of respectability," for the sake of comfort.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor is, no doubt, a very ardent Nationalist, but he is first of all a journalist, and although a literary journalist, his review of Parliamentary experiences has been extremely profitable to him, and was

at one time his principal source of income, although he was never in the Press Gallery. I recollect a familiar scene in the strangers' smoking-room in the eighties: T. P. O'Connor seated with his amanuensis, dictating



MR. HAROLD COX.

his "copy," describing what was taking place upstairs. So if he did not go to the Press Gallery, he brought the Press Gallery to him.

On the other hand Mr. Herbert Paul, unlike his predecessor at Northampton, Henry Labouchere, but

quite as much a Parliamentary journalist, was in the Press Gallery before he descended to become a Member of Parliament. In the Press Gallery he was not an ordinary reporter taking down the proceedings of the House, in the same perfunctory manner as a meeting at Caxton Hall or Cannon Street Hotel might be chronicled. He was a leader-writer, and composed his political lectures as the debate proceeded.

A CORNER OF THE PRESS GALLERY.

It is a difficult matter to become a member of the Press Gallery, and even when that privilege is granted it is no easy matter to get into the gallery itself. Sixty stone steps have to be climbed to reach it, twenty more up to the writing-room, and thirty more to reach the dining-room. The select committee (1894), presided over by Mr. Herbert Gladstone, to consider the accommodation of the House, refused a lift to the reporters (in spite of the many lifts the reporters give the members), and the

poor pressmen have still those hundred and ten stone steps to climb, more than once every day, to attend to their duties in the House. One of their number wrote thus at the time: "The popular conception of the Parliamentary journalist is a smart, active young man—always young—with phenomenal powers of endurance. But the real article is, more often than not, a middle-aged man who has risen to his present position after years of toiling and moiling in other branches of press work; and, seasoned though he may be to hardship and inconvenience, his physical powers are not beyond the reach of exhaustion. The flight of stone steps giving access from New Palace Yard to the precincts of the Reporters' Gallery is steep and difficult of negotiation, even to those in the prime of life; to the old and infirm, or to those who are 'fat and scant of breath,' it is a constant terror."

The Reporters' Gallery, like the House itself, is not large enough to acommodate all those who have a right to sit there. There is a row of boxes in front allotted to the principal representatives of the papers, and a couple of funny-looking pews at either corner, also reserved for special papers or news agencies; but the mass of gentlemen of the press have to sit at the back, at a narrow piece of wood as a desk. Between this desk and the boxes is a narrow space, so that any one passing sweeps away the reporter's copy, or the artist's sketches, with his arm or coat-tails. The reporter's view is also continually blocked by the different reporters privileged to sit in the boxes moving in and out; by the messenger going backwards and forwards for copy; and when there is any excitement on, there is positively not even standing-room. I have often had to kneel during a debate, pushed about and trodden upon by fellow-workers struggling,

like myself, to hear a word or see a speaker. The amiable official in charge of the gallery has imperative orders to allow no one to stand; but, in spite of this, the gangway is blocked, and the scene of confusion and the fighting to get into the Reporters' Gallery by those authorised to be there is a disgrace to all responsible for the accommodation of the House.

I may frankly say that the House itself, at any rate, the Gallery, is not a place adapted for work that really needs the conditions of quiet study or the seclusion of an editorial room. The poor pressmen are packed like sardines in a box, in the gallery, kneeling, crouching, trodden upon, knocked about and otherwise inconvenienced, by the reporters pushing their way past into their little boxes between the narrow little desk against the wall and the delectable row of little stalls portioned out to the favoured few. It was at one of these desks against the wall (if one can call a narrow piece of wood six inches wide a desk), that Mr. Paul sat, and in truth he became a very irritable member of the gallery whilst he was at work. I fear that I, and not a few others, in making our way past, unavoidably knocked off his manuscript, and gave some reason for the acidity in his able remarks contributed to *The Daily News*.

A well-known journalist of a different type, Sir Edward Russell, who became the editor of *The Liverpool Post*, and in consequence left the House of Commons and London, whenever he came back used to spend his holiday in his old hunting-ground, the Press Gallery of the House of Commons. It apparently struck him that he could not have too much of a good thing, for he became a Member of Parliament and studied the House from the benches, instead of from the Press Gallery. Eventually

he found he did not like it so well, and retired. There is a unanimous opinion among men who, like myself, have had long experience of the House: The ones who look on see more of the Parliamentary game than the members in the seats below.

MR. HERBERT PAUL.

Visitors to the House of Commons, who sit over the clock in the large galleries facing up the House, see directly opposite to them a gallery, under the ladies' grille, in which is seated a row of gentlemen writing. That is the Reporters' Gallery. The idle stranger gets a much better view of the House than the busy reporter, and the latter never sees the Speaker. For some unknown reason

the press representatives are not allowed into the House until after Prayers, and the Speaker has taken the chair. The chair being covered at the top and having, in addition, a projecting sounding-board, the Speaker is completely hidden from the view of those in the gallery. Only half the front benches can be seen from it, and only the tops of the heads of members speaking at the table. The Press Gallery extends four boxes down on either side, and from these points pressmen can see more of one side. When the gallery was built these side boxes did not exist, but it was soon found necessary to add to the number of seats in the gallery.

The reporters, with the exception of the few in the boxes, work, as I have already explained, under the greatest difficulty. They are cramped for space. They have the worst place in the whole House for seeing, and it is at times impossible to hear in the Reporters' Gallery what is being said. The rushing in and out of change reporters taking their turns, of officials for copy, and the low, muttering, conversational House of Commons style of speaking, continue to render the task of the reporter most difficult. Small wonder, then, that inaccurate reports sometimes find their way into the papers. But it must be admitted that the Irish members, who have not adopted the conversational tone of speaking, are frequently misunderstood by the English members, as well as by the English reporters. Their pronunciation of the English language is so peculiar, their Irish accent so puzzling, that mistakes are inevitable. For instance, a member for an Irish constituency, in speaking against a tax being placed on margarine, a substitute for butter, objected in the following words: "Misther Spaker, sor; sor, I object to the taxing of margarine. Margarine

is largely used in Oireland for cookin' porpoises (*laughter*). Oi repate, sor, for cookin' porpoises (*loud laughter*). Oi don't see what honourable gentlemen opposite mean by their laughter, because in Oireland the payple use margarine for cookin' porpoises."

Had there been no laughter, the hon. gentleman from Ireland would have been very indignant if the Saxon journalist had reported him as he had spoken, "porpoises" in place of "purposes"!

Mr. MacDonagh, in his entertaining book, *Irish Life and Character*, refers to Mr. Swift MacNeill's misfortunes suffered at the hands of the reporters in the House of Commons, but fails to point out, as I have here ventured to, that the accent of Irish members is responsible for the mistakes. Here are a few examples:

In the course of a speech, Mr. Swift MacNeill quoted the judicial declaration of the late Baron Dowse that "the resident magistrates could no more state a case than they could write a Greek ode," and it was deliciously given by a reporter as: "The resident magistrates could no more state a case than they could *ride a Greek goat!*" Baron Dowse must have immensely enjoyed this amusing rendering of his declaration. He stated in the course of a judgment in an action for libel against a newspaper arising out of an incorrect report, that once in a speech in the House of Commons he had quoted Tennyson's line: "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay," and read in a newspaper next day that he had edified the House with this statement: "Better fifty years of true love than a circus in Bombay."

Mr. Swift MacNeill figured in another amusing case of mishearing in the Reporters' Gallery. He once complained of having been roughly treated by the con-

stabulary while attending some evictions in his constituency in Donegal. "But," said the honourable member, "I took measures to put a stop to this conduct. Whenever I was hustled or knocked about by a policeman I simply chalked him, and by that means was able to identify him afterwards." This was rendered, "Whenever I was hustled or knocked about by a policeman *I simply choked him!*"

Members are more anxious to be reported than to be listened to. I remember once during the all-night sittings a formal protest was made about daybreak, by an obstructing, garrulous member, that there were no reporters present, or if there were it was too late to have the speeches reported. There is nothing stings a member more than to be bracketed with the duffers in the following way: "Sir Gilbert Snooks, Mr. Middleditt, Mr. Yawndyke, Mr. Snippers, and General Shafand then continued the discussion." This will not do for Mr. Yawndyke, so up he trots to the Members' Gallery and slyly creeps towards the end adjoining the reporters. Here he supplies the reporters with a copy of his speech, which may be politely accepted and subsequently as politely laid to rest in the waste-paper basket. On some papers the heads of the staff have a table of the length of speech each speaker is to have, and this is adhered to regardless of the matter or importance of the various speeches. The scale is regulated much in the same way as are handicaps at golf. There are "scratch men," reported in full; men with five handicap, a column; with ten, as many lines; and so on. Certain papers have their favourites. The proprietor or editor may have some young politician under his wing, and will give his utterances a column and the whole of the really good

speakers a paragraph. Small provincial papers naturally report their own member in full, and his constituents are therefore under the impression that his speech, delivered to an empty House (not reported in a London paper) was the most important oration of the whole debate.

Artists in the Reporters' Gallery are really worse off than even the writers. Reporters have only to hear; they need not see—in fact they must not raise their eyes from their paper. But artists must see, and whilst reporters are given front seats, artists are shoved behind, sometimes with two or three reporters standing in front of them. For that reason the Reporters' Gallery, as I have already explained, is of little use to them, and it is necessary to get a closer view of members in the Lobby, or in the strangers' seats under the gallery. But it is against the rules to make a note when in the latter seats, and almost impossible to make a sketch in the Lobby.

But while those who use the pen to portray M.P.s as they appear to the reporter are in such danger of being called over the coals, those who use the pencil for chronicling their impressions are allowed a far larger measure of licence. Here is one of the protests from the Press Gallery, published apropos:

"We are told that journalists are admitted to the House 'by courtesy.' That is an assumption which cannot be maintained in these days, for everybody knows that if the newspapers were by common consent to cease publishing reports of debates in Parliament, they would be implored by the House of Commons to withdraw this ban upon the loquacity of the Legislature. But in the present case there is no need to discuss the relations between the House of Commons and the press. The House has taken no action against *The Daily Chronicle.*

It is simply the offended taste of Mr. Erskine (the Sergeant-at-Arms) which has issued a decree, supported, it is true, by Mr. Peel (then Speaker), but with less than Mr. Peel's customary judgment. For what does this decree imply? That any printed remark which the Sergeant-at-Arms considers derogatory to the dignity of a member is to be visited by the exclusion of the writer from the Press Gallery and the Lobby of the House. Does Mr. Erskine take the trouble to study the caricatures of members in *Punch*? If he thinks the description of Mr. T. W. Russell's voice as 'rasping' an intolerable offence, what is his opinion of Mr. Harry Furniss's exaggeration of Mr. Mundella's nose, or of the same artist's picture of Mr. Gladstone as a dog catching flies? *Punch*, indeed, is a perpetual offender against the æsthetic canons which Mr. Erskine has set up, and which he expects us to fall down and worship. Will Mr. Harry Furniss be banished from the Press Gallery? We all know that such an arbitrary proceeding is impossible, but it ought to be made equally impossible for the Sergeant-at-Arms to sit in judgment on the Parliamentary representative of *The Daily Chronicle*, who has just as much right to describe the peculiarities of Mr. T. W. Russell as Mr. Furniss has to caricature Mr. Gladstone."

Apropos of this privilege of mine, a daily paper questioned the right of the Parliamentary sketcher to exist at all, and I suppose the opinion expressed is shared by many members of both Houses. Perhaps our days are numbered. Here is the way the leader I refer to winds up:

"Much, however, may be forgiven to the unhappy sketcher who is not allowed to exhibit his professional implement—the pencil; who cannot even transfer his

sketch to the thumbnail or the shirt-cuff. Probably there are many members of the Lower House who would like, in this matter, to be in the position of the Lords. Why should the Peers have privileges which the more or less faithful Commons do not enjoy? We see here the material for a question in the House on the part, say, of Mr. Keir Hardie or some other legislator with a striking appearance. It is hard to be made to stand, week after week, in an artistic pillory. Some day, perhaps, public opinion may decide that the person of the individual taxpayer is sacred, and that it shall be free from the assaults alike of the pencil and of the kodak. Then, indeed, will the last state of the sketcher be worse than the first, while his devices for evading the regulations will have become more subtle and perhaps more reckless. After all, we suppose the world does not exist entirely for the benefit of the gentlemen who pass their time in 'taking off' their fellow-citizens."

Until I read the last paragraph I was under the impression it did!

I have not forgotten this gentle reminder, so, kind reader—at least I trust you are kind and forgiving—I say *au revoir*, and take myself off.

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